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THE STRATEGIC IMPACT UPON THE UNITED STATES OF FUTURE NAVAL  
RIVALRIES IN SOUTH AND SOUTHEAST ASIA

by

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This thesis argues that the removal of the Cold War's stabilizing effect on Asian-Pacific security has revealed an escalating level of anxiety and growing mutual mistrust among the nations of this region, indicating future instability and possible conflict. The scaling back of military commitments in the region by the United States, combined with historical animosities are currently fueling a regional arms race among China, India, Japan, and the nations of ASEAN. These nations are thus preparing to utilize improved naval forces to play an influential if not leading role in the emerging regional power structure. Naval development programs of these nations are examined in detail.

This thesis posits that the United States maintains vital economic and security interests in this region and therefore must be actively involved in the formation of a new regional power structure. The thesis concludes with an examination of future options for U.S. military presence in Asia.

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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This thesis contends that the United States has vital economic and security interests within the Asia-Pacific region that exist entirely outside of the realm of the Cold War context. Therefore, the end of the Cold War does not signal an end to U.S. commitment to this region. On the one hand, American regional interests take the form of vigorous two-way trade, growing investment opportunities, as well as a largely untapped consumer market. On the other hand, the United States must also be alert to the impact on the regional and global balance of power of renewed naval rivalries and naval development in the Asia-Pacific region.

The so-called "peace dividend" being pursued by some U.S. policy makers takes the form of deep defense cuts with the intention of reapplying those funds toward the resolution of pressing, but strictly defined domestic crises. While this proposal is attractive at first blush, it is decidedly short-sighted and it would be dangerous to forge ahead with large scale drawdowns and a sweeping retrenchment of U.S. forces from overseas. This is especially the case in Asia.

This thesis argues that the countries of Asia are experiencing serious anxiety over the future security structure within this largely maritime region. Of greatest

concern is the possibility of a removal or large scale drawdown of U.S. forces from the region. Adding to those misgivings is the observable and widespread animosity between key countries in the region as a result of economic, cultural, and historical enmity.

In this context this thesis will examine the current naval modernization programs of: China, India, Japan, and the nations of ASEAN. These programs are being undertaken so that these individual nations will possess the military strength to play a significant role in a newly emerging security arrangement. The thesis indicates that without a strong U.S. presence, China, Japan, and even India have designs on the leadership role within such an arrangement.

Asian naval modernization programs have been seen by some observers as simply the normal maturation of military forces within a region where militaries have traditionally lagged behind those of the west. This thesis asserts, however, that these nations are not only engaged in a quantitative buildup and modernization, but, that they are also shifting the strategic focus of the utility of those forces toward newly emerging threats, and with the intention of altering the regional and global balance of power. In this case, threats are seen to be emerging in and around the vital sea-lanes of communication that ring this entire region. The threat, while not explicitly defined, is clearly the threat of uncertainty over who will control the future security situation.



Thus the naval focus of the arms buildups in these nations can be seen as preparation for undefined, but anticipated maritime conflict. The maintenance of vital American economic and political interests in the region demands that the United States remain engaged militarily in order to protect those interests from the inevitable harm of protracted conflict. A continuation of U.S. military presence in the region does not necessitate the maintenance of Cold War level forces, and the options and recommendations for a revised presence are examined in the final chapter.

## I. INTRODUCTION: POST-COLD WAR ASIA AND THE REVISION OF U.S. STRATEGIC PRIORITIES.

There is something both odd and persistent about America's two centuries of relations with the countries of East Asia. What seems odd is that Americans, so far removed from Asians space, time, language, and culture, should nonetheless thrust repeatedly toward that 'Far West.' Yet to Asia they persisted in journeying, from the end of the War of Independence right up to the present-as traders and missionaries, adventurers and consuls, soldiers, sailors, and marines, and later, tourists, airmen, experts, and investors.<sup>1</sup>

The intention of this thesis is to address what may be a long term challenge to the national security and worldwide strength of the United States. The 1992 view held by some policy makers and scholars of a post-Cold War peace dividend may be simply another way of achieving American international disengagement and may spell a long-term decline for the United States, its allies, and their shared interests around the world.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> James C. Thompson, Peter W. Stanley and John Curtis Perry, Sentimental Imperialists: The American Experience in East Asia (New York, N.Y.: Harper Torchbooks, 1981), 1.

<sup>2</sup> President Clinton proposes some widespread and deep defense cuts with the purpose of rechanneling those saved funds toward bolstering U.S. economic strength and thereby becoming economically stronger around the world. With drastic cuts in military commitments in Europe being witnessed, it would be imprudent to assume that Asia would not see similar drawdowns in the future.

As the above quotation intimates, the United States has had a long relationship with East Asia and Asia in general. It would be foolish to think that this relationship would in any way decline or carry less importance in the future. Quite clearly the relationship was extant in a different form long before the Cold War. It is critical for the United States to manage the imminent changes in this relationship from a position of strength, not weakness (perceived or otherwise).

In November 1992, the U.S. Department of Defense delivered to Congress its report titled "A Strategic Framework for the Asian Pacific Rim." This report assessed Asian security considerations in light of recent global developments and the concurrent effect those developments might have on future U.S. military commitments in the region. Notably, the report had a significant emphasis on the dynamic economic situation in Asia and the U.S. involvement therein:

Our economic and security engagement in the Asia-Pacific region since World War II has been a major factor in the region's emergence as one of the engines of global growth. Our two-way trade across the Pacific last year exceeded \$310 billion - nearly one-third larger than our trade with Europe. The US exports more to Indonesia than to Eastern Europe; more to Singapore than to Spain or Italy. US exports to East Asia and the Pacific were \$130 billion - that translates into roughly 2.6 million American jobs dependent on our trade with the region. Moreover, US firms have more than \$62 billion invested in Asia.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> U.S. Department of Defense, A Strategic Framework for the Asian Pacific Rim, Washington D.C., November 1992, 2.



It is clear from this quotation, that the DOD senses a fundamental shift in the evaluation not only of American military commitments, but also of the essential U.S. national interests being affirmed around Asia. This reassessment is taking place not so much on the international stage as it is, most notably, inside the United States itself. Adding to the magnitude of this scrutiny, this reappraisal is being conducted within the context of a particularly difficult economic period for the United States, coterminous with a renewed demand for increased attention and funding being directed toward the alleviation of serious domestic problems.

It is this desire on the part of the American people at large for the visible benefits of the "peace dividend" that tends to fuel a renewed skepticism for any U.S. policy that seems to not immediately benefit the taxpayers of the United States. This attitude can be observed in terms of foreign aid, military assistance programs and, of course, the defense budget. United States history has shown the tendency on the part of Americans to turn their focus inward in times of economic hardship. These hardships, combined with the end of the Cold War, fuel the current public preference toward solving domestic vice foreign problems.

The Defense Department strategists seek to convey that post-Cold War Asia has some unique and peculiar interests to the United States outside of the Cold War context. In fact those interests have been present throughout the duration of

the Cold War and have outlasted that conflict to now assume center stage in terms of American perceptions of national interests around the region. These interests take the form of lucrative economic markets and friendly political ties to the region that stretch far back into our past.

During the Cold War the United States carefully developed a series of bilateral and multilateral relationships around the Asian-Pacific region that were pursued in the interest of laying the groundwork for Asian goodwill toward and economic cooperation with the U.S. Extensive foreign aid to Japan, South Korea and indeed around much of Asia, was intended to influence the decision makers within these countries to either side with the United States during the Cold War or at least remain visibly outside of that conflict.

The clear approval and promotion by the United States of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) was an instance of this type of friendship building. The example of post-World War II Japan provides the best illustration of the United States placing the goals and principles of containment above what could otherwise be perceived as the regional economic and strategic self interests of the United States.

While U.S. ties to Asia span many generations, the relationship underwent a fundamental shift in the context of the Cold War, assuming a global significance. In the years since 1941, however, massive American military involvement was to be followed by diverse efforts at political tutelage, extensive cultural exchange and a level of economic and financial intercourse that was

eventually to make the Pacific-Asian region more critical to the American economy than Europe.<sup>4</sup>

Indeed, the United States began to view all of Asia through a similar prism. It could be said that the beginning of the Korean War in June of 1950 marked a pivotal watershed for U.S. policy in the Pacific. It is critical to see the Korean War as affecting more than just U.S. strategic and military interests within Asia. It was in fact the first 'Cold War war.'

Given the very nature of the region and its dependence on raw materials and maritime trade, the Korean War drove home to the United States the fact that U.S. economic policies had to be modified in order to mesh with and complement a new set of strategic goals that viewed the perimeter of Asia (Korea, Indochina, South Asia) as the holding line beyond which Communism must not be allowed to spread. While Korea was initially omitted, it was nonetheless Dean Acheson's so called "perimeter strategy" of containment delivered in January of 1950 that is seen as the defining moment in terms of setting the tone for the Cold War in Asia.<sup>5</sup> Additionally, it is the close melding of American economic and military strategy that

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<sup>4</sup> Robert A Scalapino, "The United States and Asia: Future Prospects," Foreign Affairs 70, No. 5 (Winter 1991/92): 19.

<sup>5</sup> John Lewis Gaddis, The Long Peace: Inquiries Into the History of the Cold War (New York: Oxford University Press, 1987), 73.

would serve to inform U.S. foreign policy not only in Asia, but around the world throughout the duration of the Cold War.

The end of the Cold War clearly has vindicated the overarching goals of U.S. foreign policy since 1945, thereby hopefully witnessing an end to the threat of nuclear war. What remains after the Cold War seems to be a period of international confusion and apprehension toward the shape of the future international power structure(s). A degree of global befuddlement with what the future may hold has materialized, and this situation seems to be most acute in regions that were more peripherally involved in the East-West struggle, such as the Asia-Pacific region. These countries are now forced to fundamentally reassess their individual security considerations apart and independently from the defining conflict that had informed those concerns for almost fifty years.

In terms of U.S. interests in Asia, it must be acknowledged that the economic challenges America faces there are largely of U.S. making, or at least support. Japan is held up as the most obvious example of this policy, and again it was the start of the Korean War which prompted the United States to begin to treat Japan more as a bulwark against communism than as a vanquished enemy. It was indeed during this period when Japan began to witness the first signs of spectacular economic success, enjoying a 9% growth in its overall economy during the Korean War, largely as a result of

the influx of \$4 billion from the United States spent on war supplies and recreation facilities.<sup>6</sup> Contrary to being bitter about the negative economic results which American goodwill has wrought after forty-five years of containment, the United States must shift gears and start to deal with the world, and Asia specifically, from a position of economic parity and cooperation.

Some commentators have recently voiced the belief that the continued affirmation of U.S. strategic and economic interests in the region through American military presence,

...smacks of the colonial era and the 'white man's burden' mentality. It reflects a lingering self-image of the United States as a world policeman.<sup>7</sup>

Contrary to this concern, it should be recognized that U.S. regional interests have not diminished in the least, but rather have entered a new phase. Far from neo-colonialism, an era of cooperation, coalition building, and economic liberalization may be taking shape in Asia.

The United States has sacrificed much to win the Cold War, and this sacrifice can clearly be observed in Asia. It is important to note that the United States was well aware that economic sacrifices were being made in the interest of winning

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<sup>6</sup> Mikiso Hane, Modern Japan: A Historical Survey (Boulder, Co.: Westview Press, 1986), 364.

<sup>7</sup> Selig S. Harrison and Clyde V. Prestowitz, jr., "Pacific Agenda: Defense or Economics?," Foreign Policy 79 (Summer 1990): 68.



the Cold War. While the considerable scope of Asian economic success was not anticipated, it would be a mistake to accuse U.S. policy makers of carelessly sacrificing American economic competitiveness without a thought to the long term effects of such a policy. In American eyes, the containment of Communism, the promotion of democratic ideals, and the end of the threat of nuclear war were seen as critical priorities to be pursued at almost any price.

The past forty-five years have seen American economic policies toward Asia slighted and literally driven by military and strategic exigencies. The future may witness the precise reversal of this relationship. U.S. strength in the future is clearly dependent on its ability to compete in the international economic market, largely separate from its global military strength.

As this thesis contends, in Asia, access to sea-lanes and vital export markets requires a strong naval presence to ensure those interests are maintained. It is not a question of the United States choosing between economic and military priorities; in the post-Cold War period, American military presence in Asia is an essential lever for attaining U.S. economic goals. The new paradigm of international power politics that is emerging may require less emphasis being placed on strategic deterrence and nuclear weapons and more on worldwide economic strength, but that economic strength will never mature or flourish without the maintenance of a military

capability adequate to protect the interests providing that economic potential.

One hears quite often in the United States today:  
"Where's the threat?"

...the real threat we now face is the threat of the unknown, the uncertain. The threat is instability and being unprepared to handle a crisis or war that no one predicted or expected.<sup>3</sup>

The obscure "threat of the unknown," as President Bush's "National Security Strategy" has put it, does not sit particularly well with Congress or the American people. That does not make the uncertainty any less alarming, and it is the job of military leaders and policy makers to explain the dangers inherent in that uncertainty to the American people.

In Asia it would clearly not seem wise to drawdown U.S. forces to skeletal size simply because Washington policymakers are unable to specifically name a near-term threat to U.S. regional interests. As the United States has military and economic interests in the region, protection of those interests should be a given regardless of the immediately apparent threat level.

As importantly, a significant U.S. drawdown would quite likely precipitate the very threat which the United States seems to so often require before such a threat is both taken

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<sup>3</sup> Joint Chiefs of Staff, National Military Strategy of the United States, Washington D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, January 1992, 4.

seriously and decisively dealt with. In this case a regional arms race possibly leading to regional conflict would quite clearly effect the entire world, as well as effect U.S. interests and might be prudently prevented with some careful foresight and mid to long-term planning.

It only requires a cursory glance at the headlines to witness the high degree of uncertainty that taints inter-Asian as well as Russian-Asian relations. The myriad of inter-state relationships and overlapping concerns in this region are complex. While it may be true that in terms of narrow American security interests the Asian region may currently be rather quiet, the region overall is clearly in the throes of wide-ranging uncertainty and tension.

Russian President Yeltsin's recently canceled trip to Japan would seem to acknowledge a serious impasse in the Northern territories issue, possibly surprising the Japanese, whose hints of loans, grants and investment in Russia's struggling economy was forsaken in the name of nationalistic desires within Russia. ,

China's expanding and aggressive claims to the Spratly Islands are being met with increased hostility by Vietnam and Malaysia. In February, China passed a territorial waters law over the Spratly and Paracel archipelagos and have vowed to use force to expel any intruders.<sup>9</sup> Whether these efforts are

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<sup>9</sup> Sheila Tefft, "Southeast Asians Build Up Navies To Protect Territorial Interests," Christian Science Monitor, 6 July 1992, 1.

hints at Chinese desires for future regional dominance or whether they are simply asserting long held irredentist claims, the security implications for protracted maritime warfare in the South China Sea are ominous and will be examined directly in Chapter II.

The United States can be seen to be subtly responding to this particular situation:

On some matters, such as helping to keep the balance of power in East Asia, America has a straightforward interest in not letting China have things all its own way. This is why George Bush's decision in August to sell jet fighters to Taiwan was not just Texan electoral calculations but a useful bit of Pacific geopolitics.<sup>10</sup>

While these are clear examples of regional tension, what must be remembered is that the rest of the nations within the region all have concerns and a vested stake over these and other issues; bilateral disputes are quickly becoming regional dilemmas. The combination of semi-friendly alliances coupled with mutual distrust within and among these nations leads to a heightened sense of anxiety ruling the tenor of relationships, a fact largely lost on American observers of Asia who observe a superficially benign security environment.

In sum, one can witness the genesis of a new balance of power emerging in and around Asia. The uncertainty over who will control and be more and less powerful within that new balance is the direct cause of current suspicions and tension.

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<sup>10</sup> "Deng's Last Show," Economist, 10 October 1992, 14.

Overlapping these issues is the fact that the U.S. and even Russia will not be satisfied to allow this restructuring to take place absent their strong influence and even direct intervention. Perhaps Russia and the United States may join in pursuing mutually beneficial arrangements within this region, pointing out just how fundamentally the worldwide system of interrelationships has been altered in such a short period of time.

The nations of Asia are not bluffing or trying to intimidate the United States when they expound upon their fears of an U.S. military drawdown in the Pacific. In demonstration of this fear, this thesis maintains, these nations are engaged in a perceptible and substantial arms buildup and transition in terms of indigenous naval capabilities.

This naval expansion is not only quantitative, but also reflects a fundamental shift in strategic thinking being gradually adopted by these nations. This thinking manifests itself in terms of the active pursuit of qualitatively superior and distinctively modified forces from those that have been employed in the past. These acquisitions are being pursued from the skeptical standpoint that the United States may no longer be a dependable regional stabilizer now that the veil of East-West conflict has been removed from the international power struggle, and parochial, short term U.S.



interests may hold sway in terms of the future for military deployments.

Thus, this thesis examines the recent maritime developments within China, India, Japan, and the nations of ASEAN. Following an examination of each of these programs in the larger light of their individual domestic implications and considerations, this thesis concludes with an assessment of the American military/naval presence in the region and recommendations for the scope of that presence in the future.

This thesis is approached from a decidedly post-Cold War perspective. Despite considerable uncertainty, encountering a resurgent Russia is highly unlikely, especially in the Western Pacific. Indeed, there are clearly more important and pressing concerns for the U.S. national interest in the region that require American attention and focus, and it those concerns that should drive our policy in the region and will consequently be the focus of the final chapter.

The naval focus of this thesis reflects the view that any future conflict within this region will almost surely be maritime in nature. As the individual chapters will examine, each of these nations are in varying degrees shifting the focus of their military doctrine toward maritime warfare, and in fact many national air forces are being structured to effectively meet maritime threats in this largely littoral and peninsular region.

There has been discussion that the Asian security situation resembles in many ways the circumstances surrounding the region immediately before World War II when tensions were largely minimal and trade and local development were being actively pursued. During this time, only Japan could have been considered a regional power. Today, the situation resembles pre-World War II era in some superficial ways and the region is seemingly in a similarly anticipatory mode in terms of regional leadership. China, however, in no way resembles the China of 1940, and is indeed not only a nuclear power, but it possesses the innate resources and most importantly the political will to be not only a regional leader but a maritime and world power.

A struggle for regional supremacy is beginning to take form between China and Japan. Recent rhetoric from China concerning territorial claims, combined with a renewed call from Japan that it be allowed to take on more of its defense burden, point to the high probability of this stand-off. This confrontation, in the context of the end of the Cold War and a reduced U.S. presence, is beginning to take the shape of a race for regional supremacy. The attendant uncertainty in the region, forces these two powerful Asian nations to secure their own base of power absent a defining conflict and resultant regional stability that the Cold War brought in terms of military security.

It is by no means clear who, if either, will become the dominant regional power. The struggle could last for some time, with, it will be shown later, the nations of ASEAN and India vying for similar if not as sweeping control over coinciding portions of the region.

In light of this Sino-Japanese competition, and despite whoever comes out on top in the region, the United States cannot afford to be an unengaged bystander as a new regional power arrangement takes shape. As will be shown, this necessity is not born out of a belief that U.S. presence is desired in the region, but rather, the maintenance of strictly defined U.S. national interests demands that a U.S. military presence be maintained in order to provide the United States the ability to have a determining influence on regional security matters that bear directly on not only U.S. interests, but also on global economics and the global political structure.

## II. CONTEMPORARY CHINESE NAVAL DEVELOPMENTS

### A. CHINESE MILITARY STRATEGY IN HISTORICAL CONTEXT

In many ways, the idiosyncracies of Chinese political decision making and policy formulation remain as much a mystery to the United States and the rest of the world as they were when western merchants first arrived on the shores of Southeast China in the 18th century. China has historically tended to defy worldwide trends and indeed now seems to be shunning the emerging "new world order" in whatever form it may take. China would prefer to function as a regional superpower as well as a global actor, but never at the pleasure of a dominant America. Beijing's recent rhetoric decries the perceived expansion of American hegemony at the end of the Cold War, which, in China's eyes, is leading the United States to affirm its interest around the world with impunity.<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>11</sup> China has traditionally criticized the U.S. for its perceived intrusion into the internal affairs of China vis-a-vis human rights violations. In line with these criticisms of the U.S., official rhetoric from the Chinese communist leadership has historically maintained that China has no designs on regional expansion, and that it does not intrude upon the sovereign territory of other nations. This policy, while espoused in official statements, has often been ignored in practice in the interests of supporting sympathetic communist rebels around Asia (Cambodia for example).

The mystery of China lies not simply in the apparent frustration brought about by faulty predictions of China's probable actions, but also through the misinterpretation or misreading of past foreign policies as they have affected the West, and most specifically the United States. At least some of the blame for these problems and misunderstandings rests squarely at the feet of the Chinese themselves.

This chapter examines the present Chinese naval buildup in Southeast and East Asia in the context of historical and contemporary regional policy. It assesses the effect that this growing naval presence will have upon the emerging regional power structure and examines the implications for American and indeed global policy in this vital region.

The shifting power structure this region is facing may indeed be fueled by Chinese actions in and around the South China Sea. China may be acting to force the issue addressed later in the chapter in an attempt to mark its scope of regional power, intending to use its burgeoning naval power as the foundation for its base of regional power projection, not suspecting that any western powers will significantly interfere in what China perceives as a purely regional confrontation.

"The ambiguity surrounding great power relations, in particular the rise of Japanese power, suggests to Beijing the



need to prepare for greater regional instability.<sup>1-</sup>"It is as clear to China as it is to the rest of the world that this region is now confronting considerable uncertainty. This chapter intends to show that China plans to be an effective actor in the reshaping of this region for purposes of asserting itself on the world stage and also in line with its historical desire to be free from encirclement and subsequent invasion by an enemy attempting to mass troops on any part of its border.

An ancillary result of the Cold War rivalry between the United States and the former Soviet Union has been a constant superpower presence in and around the critical sea-lanes of Southeast Asia securing the interests of the smaller regional nations, as they in turn for the most part pursued a policy of non-alignment, but with a decidedly pro-western tilt. An end to Cold War tensions will undoubtedly lead to a good deal of apprehension among these countries, only fueled by the possible emergence of a power vacuum that may be filled by the Chinese and their burgeoning naval power.

China has historically been regarded as a reactive or defensive empire with a traditionally weak military force. When expansion of his rule was desired, the emperor sought such enhancement through the benign development of tributary

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<sup>1-</sup> Robert S. Ross, "China's Strategic View Of Southeast Asia: A Region In Transition," Contemporary Southeast Asia 12, No.2 (September 1990): 101.

states which required little or no military presence and virtually no invading or occupying force being established. The tribute states simply paid their tribute out of convenience and the accompanying uncertainty as to the punishment for non-payment as well as mutually beneficial treatment in terms of trade. The weakness of this system was displayed by the fact that the farther a tribute state was from Peking, the more likely it was to defy the Emperor (Annam, e.g.).<sup>13</sup>

While this evaluation is generally accepted to be the case, it is my thesis that there is a proactively aggressive aspect of Chinese military heritage that has been ignored or disregarded as insignificant as a force in historical analysis, and that heritage may provide a touchstone for future actions. There has recently been some reassessment of Chinese history along these lines, most notably by J.K. Fairbank:

Why have China scholars for 2,000 years gone along with this Confucian refusal to accept the military establishment as an occupational class? Professional military forces turn up all the time in Chinese history. Our refusal to look at them as a military class suggests that China scholars are still under the sway of the great Confucian myth of the state, government by virtue.<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>13</sup> John K. Fairbank, Edwin O. Reischauer, and Albert M. Craig, East Asia: Tradition & Transformation, Revised Edition, (Boston, Ma.: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1989), 265-267.

<sup>14</sup> John King Fairbank, China: A New History (Cambridge, Ma.: Harvard University Press, 1992), 109. This book, the last by Professor Fairbank, contains many personal observations and

The disdain for the military within the upper echelons of Chinese society was largely a function of the power held by the Confucian elite scholar/administrators and their belief that learning, study and administration of the state was superior to the violent ways of the warrior. Ascension to positions of power within this system was strictly controlled by utilization of the stringent examination system. This system necessarily limited the upper class to only those truly learned men, who were not simply learned, but learned in the tradition of Confucian perpetuation of their own power.

Thus the Emperor was surrounded by these Confucian masters, and seemingly ruled his Empire solely upon the strength of their guidance and expertise, seldom relying on the barbaric means of the military. While this is generally accepted to be the case, it must be remembered who held the primary responsibility for writing history in China; the Confucian scholars. These men quite obviously would inflate their own influence upon Chinese history and denigrate those of their only possible rival for power, the military.

As Fairbank points out, however, the Emperor relied heavily, albeit subtly, on his ability to resort to violence and military force when required to quell regional disturbances or border disputes. The system of interstate

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political opinions about China and its relations with the world. This reassessment of the Chinese military in the context of Chinese history remains a distinct departure from his previous works.

relations during the time of Imperial China was extremely complex, and the Emperor was forced to not only rely on the tribute system as well as interstate commerce to keep the peace, but clearly he would be required to maintain an adequate military force to meet any intractable situations which threatened to tear apart his Empire.

Ruling and administrating within such a geographically immense Empire required the maintenance of a standing military force dispersed at critical border areas where troubles were most likely to appear due in part to their physical separation from the central authorities in Beijing. Upon closer scrutiny it is clear that the "Wu" (civil order) aspect of the Emperors rule is seen as inferior in importance to "Wen" (military order).<sup>15</sup>

Fairbank is not questioning the low social position that the military was forced to suffer within Imperial China, rather, it is asserted that a strong military tradition as well as the tacit approval of that tradition by the leadership has long existed within the strict confines of the Confucian state. The most significant event in the formation of a viable military tradition within China occurred when the central Asian invaders began to overrun and eventually rule China in the form of the Liao (960-1125), Jin (1127-1279), and the Yuan (1279-1386) dynasties. These conquerors brought with

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<sup>15</sup> John King Fairbank, China: A New History, 69.

them the military skills inherited from centuries as nomadic tribesman on the hills of inner Asia, and proved once and for all "...the utility of militarism as the source of imperial power.<sup>16</sup>"

The fact remains that every Chinese Empire was by definition brought down, as well as introduced, via violent means. In retrospect it seems rather implausible that any Empire could have been thought to persist in ruling without a strong military and the occasional introduction of that military in efforts to preserve the Emperor's rule and perpetuate the Empire. The Emperor was, after all, first and last "...the great executioner.<sup>17</sup>"

The military is traditionally seen as making its modern reemergence in terms of social respect with the ascent to power of Mao Zedong and the rise of the "Red Army" in the twentieth century. As a result of diminished professional status suffered by the military, China has subsequently been forced to rapidly modernize its military to catch up with the west. China's failure to accomplish military modernization earlier and at a quicker pace has led to a perception of weakness and an inability to deal with the rising forces of the west and, of course, Japan. Lack of technically advanced

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<sup>16</sup> John King Fairbank, China: A New History, 111-112. The most significant contribution that these tribal invaders made was the introduction of the horse as a means of transportation and as a vehicle during battle for the warrior.

<sup>17</sup> John King Fairbank, China: A New History, 112.



weapons and an intransigence concerning the adoption of western tactics and strategies led to profound military disadvantages in conflicts with seemingly smaller and less powerful nations, for example Japan.

To understand the rationale surrounding China's relations with the rest of the world, one must take into account the intense Sinocentrism that has been an integral part of the Chinese mindset for centuries. "...Sinocentrism was so strong that in the face of a superior military power, China could draw in the foreigner and assimilate him...<sup>18</sup>" The Chinese kingdom has always thought of itself as the middle of the universe. This idea, while seemingly pompous or immodest, was nonetheless sincerely felt. This was eventually taken to be an operational tenet of Chinese foreign policy, and was indeed highly successful with the foreign Mongol and Manchu conquerors.

...for at least three thousand years, China had been the cultural center of the Far East- indeed of the whole world, as far as she could see. From that culture all peoples on the periphery had borrowed, the Japanese for example their script. So it was perfectly right that she should call herself the central country, the Middle Kingdom, perfectly right that her Emperor assume cosmic dimensions and be everywhere recognized as the Son of Heaven, Lord of Ten Thousand Years.<sup>19</sup>

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<sup>18</sup> Gerald Segal, Defending China (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1985), 32.

<sup>19</sup> Peter Ward Fay, The Opium War: 1840-1842 (New York: W.W. Norton, 1975), 29.

These ideas would come to full maturation and some would say revision with the emergence of Mao Zedong and his "Red Army." The professional Whampoa cadets of the Nationalist Army led by Chiang Kai-Shek, eager to apply his recently acquired knowledge of Soviet military organization and training, formed the well disciplined foundation for the Chinese Nationalist military forces.<sup>20</sup> While fighting against the tenaciously dedicated peasant armies of the People's Liberation Army (PLA) led by Mao Zedong and Zhou Enlai, these two groups simultaneously answered the call for armed resistance against the Japanese invasion of Manchuria, and eventually China proper. These efforts in the early days of World War II, while not entirely successful, proved to be the turning point for the stature of the military in Chinese society. Most importantly the men under arms were raised up in the eyes of the Chinese people as heroes.

The mode of military strategy and tactics adopted by Mao were, nonetheless, antiquated by Western standards. In his view there could be no technological advancement that could ever outstrip the ability of the properly motivated peasant armies to meet that challenge. In Mao's eyes, as long as the PLA was fighting against imperialism and the encroachment of barbarians, they would prevail because they had the emotional

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<sup>20</sup> Jonathan D. Spence, The Search for Modern China (New York: W.W. Norton, 1990), 338-339.

advantage of a cause to die for, regardless of the weapons utilized by the invaders.

Under Mao's tutelage, the guiding, albeit imprecise, principle of warfare was termed the "People's War."

People's war is...essentially the notion that war must have popular support and be suited to local conditions. In China's case this means essentially a mass army prepared to trade space for time and men for weapons.<sup>21</sup>

It is this concept of a "defensive offense" combined with a seeming willingness to sacrifice soldiers indiscriminately that has often inspired grudging disbelief from China's enemies. The reasoning behind this strategy lies in the fact that, in most cases, China's attackers have arrived over land, and defense against those assaults have been conducted by the army. Therefore, massive numbers of soldiers have traditionally been kept under arms.

Additionally, China has long recognized the advantages that her vast and varied geography provide when defending the homeland.<sup>22</sup> Attackers have had to literally chase the Chinese armies around the countryside until often the enemy was too exhausted or too far removed from resupply lines to finish the job they had started. This "hit-and-run" strategy may sound simplistic, but it was clearly an operating principle espoused by Mao Zedong within the ideals of the "People's War." This

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<sup>21</sup> Gerald Segal, 58.

<sup>22</sup> Gerald Segal, 11.

type of guerilla warfare was seen as an extremely useful tool against invaders on the familiar landscape, especially when faced with superior military machinery, but not outmanned. As Mao himself wrote in 1929:

Divide our forces to arouse the masses, concentrate our forces to deal with the enemy. The enemy advances, we retreat; the enemy camps, we harass; the enemy tires, we attack; the enemy retreats, we pursue. To extend stable base areas, employ the policy of advancing in waves; when pursued by a powerful enemy, employ the policy of circling around.<sup>23</sup>

In the case of the Japanese occupation of China during World War II, China suffered incomprehensible loss of life and material at the hands of the Japanese. Japan in fact almost succeeded in occupying the whole of China, but not quite. For China this conflict was clearly disastrous, but it may quite likely be the inability of the Japanese to maintain the massive effort required in both China and the Pacific against the U.S. that directly contributed to the end of World War II.

Since the days of Mao's "Red Army" many lessons have been learned by the Chinese, namely, that advanced military technology is clearly needed, although a massive amount of troops are still kept under arms. Gerald Segal is correct when he notes that China has been extremely pragmatic in the historical development of its military strategy:

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<sup>23</sup> Jonathan Spence, 375.

In sum, historical traditions governing the use of force do at times match present day practice, but in no case do they determine contemporary policy. Modern Chinese strategy seems overwhelmingly a result of pragmatic reactions to changing factors in any given crisis.<sup>24</sup>

The above quotation draws an important distinction, and one that bears directly upon the possible shape that future Chinese foreign policy may assume. The particular strategy that China chooses to employ in any given circumstance will change with the time and conditions (albeit, sometimes slowly compared to the west), but the goals of Chinese foreign policy and the resulting military strategies have remained essentially consistent over time. A primary operational tenet of Chinese foreign policy has essentially remained unaltered since Imperial China, namely China has attempted to avert encroachment or encirclement by any other nation. China has explained all offensive attacks as merely attempts at power diffusion or as the squelching of any designs on attacking Chinese territory that other nations may have harbored. Certainly not all Chinese military actions have been nobly based, but it is important to realize that China believes this to be the case.

China purports not to have designs on imperial expansion and wish to be merely free to assert its own autonomous rights over the historically held lands of ancient Chinese civilization. Their goal therefore has been to preserve the

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<sup>24</sup> Gerald Segal, 235.



nation and prevent any one power from gaining too much control in any peripheral area that might be perceived as a future external threat to Chinese sovereignty. They have not always been successful in this pursuit, and more often than not the Chinese population and civilization were seriously harmed as a result of foreign colonialism or imperialism, violent, or otherwise.

Innovations like Christian missions, Western education, and foreign investment became two-edged, often seen as forward steps in our long term foreign view yet also frequently destructive to China's contemporary well being. At stake was an entire way of life, a civilization on a grander scale than the economics or psychology of imperialism.<sup>25</sup>

It is in this sense that China has learned an important lesson from the brutal Japanese occupation in the 1940's. This type of national humiliation is just the type of event that China has since focused its military efforts at avoiding. Their strategy has always centered on the maintenance of their self-perceived superiority, and they can be counted on to maintain their own path even as the 21st century begins. It is in this light that they perceive U.S. encroachment in Asian affairs as being the genesis of global designs harbored by America for worldwide domination and hegemony.<sup>26</sup>

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<sup>25</sup> John King Fairbank, China: A New History, 189.

<sup>26</sup> Ji Guoxing, "Post Cold War Pacific Asia: A Chinese Perspective," Asian Defence Journal, July 1992: 33.

These underlying goals of Chinese military strategy must be kept in mind when examining the future of Chinese foreign policy and when making predictions about China's probable actions. The Cold War may be over, but China's lot has remained virtually unaltered by the fall of Communism, except for the fact that they remain the last powerful bastion of communism. Russia is seen by China as a traitor, and as failing to properly utilize the principles of communism to their full potential.

In line with either a fear of being left out of the Asian power structure, or seeing a chance to assert itself in light of the apparent waning concern by the United States in the region, China is beginning to affirm its own self-interests and ancient irredentist claims around Asia.

It is the changing shape of the Chinese military structure and its effects on Chinese foreign policy that will now be examine.

## **B. CHINA'S EMERGING NAVAL POTENTIAL**

From the 1950's up until the 1980's the Chinese navy's mission has been guided by the war doctrine set forth by the former navy commander Xiao Jingguang:

...the navy should be a light type navy, capable of inshore defense. Its key mission is to accompany the

ground forces in war actions. The basic characteristic of this navy is fast deployment, based on its lightness.<sup>27</sup>

This statement clearly demonstrates the auxiliary manner in which China has traditionally regarded the use of its navy. More a coast guard and support unit for the massive armies of China's past, the navy has never been regarded as critical to the military potency of China, and its slow development has clearly displayed this neglect.

China's maritime heritage has historically been given little to no credit in comparison with other imperial ventures and accomplishments. But it is clear that any empire the size of China would require the maintenance of some type of maritime force in being, to protect seaborne and coastal trade if for no other more aggressive requirements.

Few classically educated chroniclers, concentrated as they were upon imperial government, ever went to sea. Chinese seafarers did not write memoirs. Because the sea, unlike the steppe, did not harbor any rivals for power, it had been given little importance in Chinese history. Yet Chinese life from the start had a maritime wing more or less equal and opposite to the Inner Asian wing.<sup>28</sup>

Fairbank points out that the reliance on maritime transport was developed long before written historical records were maintained. According to archaeological records,

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<sup>27</sup> You Ji and You Xu, "In Search Of Blue Water Power: The PLA Navy's Maritime Strategy In The 1990's," The Pacific Review 4, No.2: 137.

<sup>28</sup> John King Fairbank, China: A New History, 191.

however, these ancient seafarers were responsible for providing access to the largely maritime regions of Southeast China whose coastal/riverine areas and offshore islands were unapproachable by land, most especially during the monsoon seasons. It is of particular note that the Chinese are credited with inventing the stern-post rudder, "...a key invention of nautical technology that appeared in Europe only a thousand years later."<sup>29</sup>

This sea-going tradition, while essentially concentrating on maritime trade protection, never translated into a strong coastal defense force for Imperial China. It is only in recent years that China has come to the realization that the maintenance of a strong naval force capable of sustained battle some distance from shore is critical to the protection of its overall national security. The easing of Cold War tensions has only caused to bring this point home even more graphically. The possibility of a "power vacuum" emerging in the region in and around China's coastal waters has prompted a critical and urgent reassessment of China's naval strength from within the power structure of the Communist party.

China does not necessarily see the emergence of a power vacuum as a detriment, but it certainly realizes the urgent need to prepare for this eventuality. "China, in fact, is eager to maintain an influential regional political role so as

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<sup>29</sup> John King Fairbank, China: A New History, 192.

to prepare itself for an era of enhanced political and, perhaps, military competition.<sup>30</sup>"

Threats to Chinese security are seen to be shifting in the past few years. "The more imminent threats appears less major and come from Vietnam, India and Taiwan.<sup>31</sup>" It is not so much the fact that the superpower threat posed by the United States and Russia has completely disappeared, but rather that it has receded in potential, giving rise to new threats. It is as if the removal of Cold War tensions has lifted the lid on long standing tensions in the region that, after all, had been existent long before the Cold War and are now coming to fruition. This is a theme that can be quite clearly observed in almost every heretofore Cold War theater around the world.

As mentioned above, China has traditionally faced the threat of invasion or imperialism from its land borders. Today, threat perceptions have shifted decidedly away from China's western and northern borders toward the view that any future rivalry or threat will almost certainly arise from China's Eastern and Southeastern coastal areas. This profound transformation in terms of military threat perceptions directly informs the ongoing reassessment of Chinese defense priorities.

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<sup>30</sup> Robert S. Ross, 102.

<sup>31</sup> You Ji and You Xu, 140.



Additionally, China has most of its intercourse with the rest of the world through the economic markets contained within these regions. The inner, western and northern sections of China remain unknown regions to most people, even those that have trade and economic ties to China's more prosperous regions. China's future almost certainly lies in these critically important economic zones.

With these factors in mind it is no wonder that China feels it necessary to revisit the importance attached to the development and maintenance of a stronger naval force. The Chinese leadership realizes that they have a formidable task in trying to bring their naval forces up to date and become capable of competing with even the other smaller, technically advanced regional navies.<sup>32</sup>

Even though the Chinese defense budget has come under the same types of fiscal pressures that have affected the entire Chinese economy, funding for the PLA is beginning to see a shift away from troop maintenance toward the adoption of high technology weapon systems. "...Deng Xiaoping has reaffirmed that the Chinese Army must be reduced in size and that the Navy must be modernized- with high grade precision and advanced equipment."<sup>33</sup> Austere programs to reduce the budget are thus resulting in severe personnel cuts, some estimates

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<sup>32</sup> Martin Douglas, "Navies of the Far East," Naval Forces: International Forum for Maritime Power, No. II/1991: 60-61.

<sup>33</sup> Asian-Pacific Defence Reporter, August-September 1992, 20.

positing that "...between 300,000 and 500,000 men and women will be demobilized during the next five to six years<sup>34</sup>."

While the 1992 defense budget is listed as US\$6bn (a 12% increase over 1991),<sup>35</sup> that number reflects only a portion of the actual funds available for defense expenditures and research. Funds listed separately from the defense budget, under the heading of science and technology, provide research and development for PLA programs.

In addition, the scope of Chinese arms sales around the world has led to the defense budget being "almost doubled" in the past year by the influx of these funds into defense allocation.<sup>36</sup> Most importantly, the Chinese leadership remains committed to maintaining the current levels of modernization as explicated in the 1991-95 Eight Year Plan.<sup>37</sup> This plan can be seen to be the low limit to which Chinese military spending will dip, with increases over the planned allocations a possibility.

While military funding continues to be listed as the fourth of the "Four modernizations" in China, the growing importance of increasing naval funding is seen in recent

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<sup>34</sup> Clare Hollingworth, "PLA Faces Big Cuts," Asia-Pacific Defence Reporter, August-September 1992, 25.

<sup>35</sup> Gary Klintworth, "Latest Soviet Carrier for Beijing Fleet?," Asia-Pacific Defence Reporter, August-September 1992, 26.

<sup>36</sup> Clare Hollingworth, 25.

<sup>37</sup> Far Eastern Economic Review, 8 August 1991.

rhetoric from Beijing in statements to the effect that: "... we should cut a few mechanized divisions so as to allocate more funds to the navy" and "It seems increasingly clear that the growth in China's military budget will go to the navy."<sup>38</sup>

The 14th Communist Party Congress held in October, 1992 witnessed similar signals toward military/maritime modernization and improved efficiency at the expense of antiquated Chinese military methods. The Central Military Commission Chairman and Party Secretary-General Jiang Zemin spoke to these issues when he delivered his address to the Congress.

He said the military will be turned into a 'strong, modernized, revolutionary regular army. Defence capabilities will provide powerful protection for the reforms, opening up and economic development.' Jiang also specifically referred to the PLA's duties as defending China's 'sovereignty over its territory, territorial waters and air space, its maritime rights and of safeguarding the unity and security of the motherland.'<sup>39</sup>

The meeting of the Congress also saw a significant shift in the upper levels of the Communist Party leadership. While Deng Xiaoping actively sought to reduce military influence at the very highest levels of the Party, it is significant to note that General Liu Huaqing remains as the lone military member of the elite standing committee, and thus a powerful

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<sup>38</sup> You Ji and You XU, 140.

<sup>39</sup> Tai Ming Cheung, "Back to the Front," Far Eastern Economic Review, 29 October 1992, 16.

voice of authority in terms of the effect that budgetary constraints will have on the direction of the military.

General Liu is a long time friend and ally of Deng, as well as a strong supporter of military reform and modernization. Most importantly for the military is the fact that Liu is a lifetime navy man who, as a navy commander, has overseen the recent Chinese naval modernization and it is anticipated that his "...commanding position in defence decision-making could see particular attention paid to these areas."<sup>40</sup>

In their pursuit of building a stronger navy, China has been particularly careful to expound upon the strategic purposes for its newly emboldened maritime force. The new strategy encompasses four specific goals.<sup>41</sup> (1) Capture defend and/or occupy island territories. This is regarded as an area where conflict could arise very soon in the near future as China has disputed claims with Vietnam and others over the Spratly and Paracel Island groups. (2) Protect and conceal sea transportation lanes. In conjunction with the island groups, control over the critical sea-lanes of communication (SLOC's) in the vicinity of China's coast will be critical to the outcome of any such dispute. (3) Coastal defense. This would amount to an upgrade of their present "green water" or

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<sup>40</sup> Tai Ming Cheung, 15

<sup>41</sup> You Xi and You XU, 142.

coastal patrol naval capabilities. There has recently been an upsurge in piracy along the Southeastern coast of China and along Vietnam's eastern coast in the South China Sea (4) Deterrence. Seen as central to the new concept of naval power in China. The new navy will be looked upon as a symbol of national and international prestige and might. It is in this sense that the navy will be used in a "power projection" role. It is in the exercise of power projection where some analysts see China's greatest weakness in terms of dealing with regional threats and asserting its interests throughout the area.<sup>42</sup>

An examination of Chinese naval hardware and intended purchases will clearly point out the shift in emphasis away from coastal defense to blue water power projection in terms of this new concentration on deterrence capability:

The concept of deterrence constitutes the core of the navy's maritime strategy. The navy commander, Zhang Liangzhong, commented: 'A peacetime navy is the symbol of power of a country'. As a weak sea power, China suffers from lack of credibility in carrying out its political and diplomatic objectives.<sup>43</sup>

The Chinese navy currently possesses 1 "Xia" class strategic submarine, 4 "Han" class tactical nuclear powered submarines, and 88 conventional submarines (84 "Romeo" class,

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<sup>42</sup> William T. Tow, "Naval Power and Alternative Security Postures in a 'Post-Cold War' Asia Pacific Order," Journal of the Australian Institute, November 1991: 46.

<sup>43</sup> You Ji and You Xu, 142.



of which 34 are operational, 3 upgraded "Ming" class and 1 improved "Romeo"). It is rumored that no new "Xia" class submarines will be built in order to put greater emphasis and funding into developing a more modern and larger ballistic missile submarine<sup>44</sup>. The maintenance of 5 SSBN/SSN's places China third in the world in terms of numbers of sea-launched ballistic missiles.<sup>45</sup>

What remains clear is the dedication which the PRC is demonstrating toward the development of a strategic deterrent in terms of a powerful submarine force.<sup>46</sup> It is true, as noted above, that the bulk of the Soviet made older "Romeo" class submarines do not in fact go to sea. It is, however, the development of new classes of submarines that bear consideration and attention in the future. There is an observable commitment within the leadership of the PRC toward funding the research and development of a technically advanced submarine force, that if even partially realized will be unrivalled in all of Asia.

The emerging threat as perceived by the Chinese, however, requires a more wide-ranging response in terms of types of naval platforms. The rapid expansion of the navy's "blue water" surface force capability is clearly needed to conduct

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<sup>44</sup> "The Military Balance 1991-92," 139.

<sup>45</sup> You Ji and You Xi, 143.

<sup>46</sup> Martin Douglas, 60.

the above mentioned power projection role and assert Chinese interests well offshore in the South China Sea. While an improved surface fleet is certainly on the agenda, it is the timely acquisition of an aircraft carrier that is seen as the foundation of the new Chinese navy.

If the navy has a carrier with forty aircraft on board, it can achieve the combat effectiveness of 200 to 800 coast-based fighters in air support functions. And the area under control of a convoy headed by a carrier is fifty times as large as that controlled by a convoy of destroyers. The navy only needs one such task force to control the entire sea and air space around the Nansha Islands.<sup>47</sup>

There have recently been rumors that the Chinese are interested in purchasing the former Soviet (now Ukrainian) aircraft carrier "Varyag." While some haggling over the price being proposed by Ukrainian officials have stalled such talks, it remains clear that China is willing to negotiate the terms of the deal. Of particular note is the fact that the U.S.\$2.4bn price tag would almost wipe out China's budget for weapons procurement, but there is hope in China that the Ukrainian officials will be willing to accept barter goods as partial payment for the carrier.<sup>48</sup> While this vessel is not even completely built, it would be a welcome addition to the

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<sup>47</sup> Martin Douglas, 145.

<sup>48</sup> Tai Ming Cheung, "Loaded Weapons: China on Arms Buying Spree in Former Soviet Union," Far Eastern Economic Review, 3 September 1992, 21.

Chinese fleet and undoubtedly send shock waves throughout the rest of Asia.

The surface component of the PLAN is modest but also undergoing modernization in line with the shifting threat perceptions in the region. China has 57 principal surface combatants, primarily destroyers and frigates purchased or manufactured via license from Russia.<sup>49</sup> The locally built "Kotlin" destroyers are a variant on the Soviet "Luda" class<sup>50</sup>, and design improvements are being made as "Styx" SSM's have been incorporated into the fire control system and hull modifications have been made to enable the deployment of 1 French built "Dauphin" Z-9A helicopter. In addition to the 19 destroyers and 37 smaller frigates, the Chinese possess some 215 missile patrol craft, 160 torpedo patrol craft, as well as 1 minelayer and 127 mine counter-measures craft.<sup>51</sup>

In line with China's desire to protect offshore island possession from occupation and in the interest of being able to seize those islands from an occupying force, they have significantly built up their amphibious capability. The largest of these vessels are the 3 "Yukan" class LST's capable of carrying 200 troops and 10 tanks apiece. These complement

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<sup>49</sup> "The Military Balance 1991-92," 140.

<sup>50</sup> Martin Douglas, 60.

<sup>51</sup> "The Military Balance 1991-92," 140.

the 13 ex-U.S. "Shan" class LST's which are quite old but can carry 150 troops and 16 tanks apiece.<sup>52</sup>

The maritime nature of the region under question and the relative proximity to the mainland of these islands gives China the luxury of being able to utilize medium to long range land based aircraft in direct support of their naval forces. This is another area where Russia and its eagerness to sell arms for hard cash or barter has aided the Chinese. Of recent note is the signing of a contract worth U.S.\$1 billion for the purchase of 24 Su27 fighters. Half of these jets have been delivered. There have been additional rumors that China has purchased MiG31 Foxhound fighters, and more significantly the Tu22M bomber with an impressive range of 4,000km.<sup>53</sup>

China has insisted in the negotiations for all these weapons and systems, that they are meant for defensive purposes only. It would seem clear that most of these aircraft and naval vessels could be brought to bear in an offensive mode with little to no alteration. What is evident from the types of equipment being purchased and the pace and enthusiasm with which China has pursued these various contracts is the fact that they are clearly preparing for threats from seaward areas and intend to meet or deter those

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<sup>52</sup> "The Military Balance 1991-92," 140.

<sup>53</sup> Tai Ming Cheung, 21.

threats with the enhanced capabilities these purchases would provide.

With these facts in mind it is apparent that China's naval modernization will continue at a moderate pace in line with domestic and economic considerations. China has long term interests throughout the region it clearly intends to see are maintained. Finally, it is important to remember that the intentions for the upgrade of the Chinese navy were clearly voiced well before the collapse of the Soviet Union and the rising tide of democracy around the world. In light of these profound international developments, it would only stand to reason that China will aggressively push this modernization program forward in an attempt to assert itself in a region where China may find herself the dominant actor in an area of vast resources and expanding economic opportunities.

While this modernization is being undertaken with no overt intention of military expansion by the Chinese, there remains a good deal of skepticism around the whole of Asia concerning Chinese intentions for the future.

### **C. CHINA'S EMERGING REGIONAL POLICY**

It stands to reason that with the emergence of a stronger Chinese navy patrolling the SLOC'S of Southeast Asia, a reassessment of China's relationship with the smaller nations of this region would be appropriate.



Steven Levine took an overview of Chinese regional policy and reached the following cogent conclusions:

China's security concerns focus on Asia, and its military power does not extend beyond the region. Its political and cultural influence have been strongest in Asia, and the largest proportion of its foreign trade is conducted with its Asian neighbors....Although much, if not most, of China's foreign policy is focused on Asia, at the conceptual level the Chinese rarely think in regional terms at all...To a significant degree, China has been a regional power without a regional policy.<sup>54</sup>

It is this seeming contradiction between practice and theory that needs to be addressed in the near future for China to clearly meet the ensuing demands of a regional power. China has historically dealt with other Asian nations only in terms of enhancing its own international position. It is the improvement of its regional standing which is seen by China as a stepping stone to international acceptance and cooperation. They will never tolerate any type of new world order designed and led by the United States.

In the emerging era of international cooperation and easing tensions among the superpowers, it seems apparent that the way is clear for China to actively pursue mutually beneficial policies in terms of its peripheral neighbors. It is just this type of "detente" which could be quite

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<sup>54</sup> Steven I. Levine, "China in Asia: The PRC as a Regional Power," in Harry Harding, ed. China's Foreign Relations In The 1980's (New Haven, Ct.: Yale University Press, 1984), 107.

advantageous to China as it ardently attempts to put its own domestic economy on the road to revival and modernization.

Robert Ross speaks to the rationale behind China's need for a continued era of regional stability:

Beijing's regional policies aim to promote a peaceful Asian environment in which China can focus on domestic economic development. Indeed, Beijing must prolong the period of regional detente, as it is still technologically backward compared to its regional competitors.<sup>55</sup>

Unfortunately it is becoming apparent that economic cooperation and growth do not necessarily lead to the reductions in overall tension levels between nations involved in the pursuit of economic progress. The situation is often looked at, rightly or wrongly, as a zero-sum game. One nations economic gain in terms of open markets or agreements for purchases is seen as another nations lost opportunity. China, in the throes of historic economic reform internally, is in the position where every economic opportunity is seen as one more step toward both economic independence and the survival of the communist system.

It is in light of this disturbing truth that China, as well as the rest of Asia, must necessarily come to grips with the fact that they need to be prepared to protect what is seen as their national economic interests. Protection of such interests such as oil wells, fishing areas, and exclusive

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<sup>55</sup> Robert Ross, 108.

economic zones, in some cases requires the threat of the use of force. While negotiation and economic cooperation lends a degree of stability to these issues, there are apparently some intractable situations arising in the region, most notably in the South China Sea.

The Spratly Islands lie directly off the Eastern coast of Vietnam and are claimed in at least some part by Vietnam, Malaysia, the Philippines, Taiwan, Brunei, as well as China. The recent naval acquisitions mentioned above, as well as the newly acquired technology for inflight refueling (via Israel) has emboldened the Chinese to declare the entire South China Sea as sovereign territory to 1600km south of Hainan Island.<sup>56</sup> They remain the most powerful contender to these islands, but are meeting with harsh criticism as well as occasional resistance, most notably from the Vietnamese.

A law passed by China in February claimed all the Spratly's, the Paracel Islands as well as the Japanese administered Senkaku Islands as territorial waters and reserved "...the right to use force to expel intruders."<sup>57</sup> The area is believed to be rich in liquid natural gas as well as petroleum and China has recently signed an exploration

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<sup>56</sup> "Spratly Islands Rivalries Bring Regional Navies Into Focus," Jane's Defense Weekly, 22 August 1992, 19.

<sup>57</sup> Sheila Tefft, "Southeast Asians Build Up Navies To Protect Territorial Interests," Christian Science Monitor, 6 July 1992, 1.

agreement with Crestone Corp. of Denver Colorado to explore the possibility of energy deposits in the area.

The fact remains, however, that all the claimants to this area, except Brunei, have military installations in the Spratly Islands. Up to this point none of them have taken any more direct action than protesting China's designs on the islands.<sup>58</sup> China would seem to have anticipated this reaction and is pressing ahead with its intentions of developing the area. There has been little response from the west, although the recent sale of F-16's to Taiwan from the U.S. would seem to indicate Washington's displeasure with China's growing expansionist tendencies.

Of particular importance to the Japanese in this issue is the safe passage of raw materials and petroleum that must pass through these waters enroute to Japan. Any interruption in the flow of those goods could have a significant impact on the Japanese economy.

In addition to these difficulties is the issue of Taiwan itself which China claims as its territory. While Taiwan proudly claims itself to be part of a single China, the present communist leadership in Beijing stands in direct contrast to the Taiwanese pluralistic parliamentary system. Fortunately, only an unlikely overt declaration of independence by the Taiwanese could result in violent

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<sup>58</sup> Hormuz P. Mama, "Tensions Mount Within the Asia-Pacific Region," International Defense Review, August 1992, 731.

confrontation. In fact relations between the two have been improving steadily in recent years as free trade barriers have been removed and "...it is estimated that Taiwan-based companies have invested at least U.S.\$3bn in China since the late 1980's."<sup>59</sup>

It remains the smaller nations of Southeast Asia, and particularly Vietnam, that are the most concerned over Chinese intentions in and around the South China Sea. They have the most to lose from Chinese domination as well as precious little force they can bring to bear against the growing Chinese naval presence. It will be seen in Chapter V that prudence dictates that these countries prepare for regional confrontation, and that preparation takes the form of naval modernization.

The truth remains that China would be rather well served by the maintenance of the status quo in this region. It would undoubtedly benefit from a continued U.S. military presence in the area, as this would allow China to improve its domestic situation while modernizing the navy at its chosen pace. China is also carefully pursuing the resolution of its irredentist claims via diplomacy, negotiation, as well as military deployment. Beijing pursues this seemingly contradictory, two-tiered approach on the assumption that the U.S. will not interfere in these largely regional issues.

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<sup>59</sup> Hormuz P. Mama, 731.



Finally, while the Japanese are concerned with Chinese intentions, the perception of the Japanese by the Chinese is as equally complex and bears careful examination. Japan clearly has the ability and the intention to be a major participant in the reconstitution of the power structure in Southeast Asia. They have already opened up highly lucrative markets in the area, and now see China as possessing huge economic potential, especially in terms of a large untapped labor force.

Chinese misgivings about Japanese intentions are serious at best:

...Beijing's interest in promoting Sino-Japanese economic co-operation is accompanied by Chinese apprehension of Japan's alleged "great power" ambitions in Asia. Of particular concern to Chinese leaders is the trend in Japanese military spending.<sup>60</sup>

China sees the emergence of a any type of power vacuum in Southeast Asia as opening the markets in this region wide for Japanese expansion and exploitation. China clearly can not compete economically with Japan, and only the rapid expansion and modernization of the Chinese navy will allow them to challenge Japan on the high seas, which will be their primary chance of ensuring some type of power base.

As will be seen in Chapter IV the Japanese navy has grown to a quite formidable size in the past few years with the

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<sup>60</sup> Robert Ross, 112.

utilization of some U.S. technology and assistance. Japan would undoubtedly rule the waves of the region if the United States were to leave the area today. This development is of course another reason that China may like to see a continued U.S. presence in the region. The historic distrust and indeed hatred of the Japanese by the Chinese surely transcends any short term misgivings that China may have about a western superpower patrolling China's adjacent sea-lanes.

It is out of this rather murky combination of regional dynamics that China must form a coherent regional policy to address its own needs and the very real fears of its neighbors. It would seem that China needs to become a cooperative and trusted regional force if it is to be accepted as a global power. China clearly has at least voiced its intentions to meet these goals. Whether internal political dynamics and regional suspicions of ulterior motives will derail such efforts can only be guessed. What is clear is that the simmering threat level is slowly rising within the region, and one of the major reasons is Chinese attempts at marking its place within the emerging power structure. It also seems clear that the cornerstone of China's future regional policies clearly rests in the emergence of an emboldened navy.

If China is successful in its various efforts at acquiring advanced submarine technology and mid-to-long range bomber/strike aircraft, the balance of power in the entire

Asian region would clearly begin to tilt in China's direction. Considered in conjunction with naval advancements and the aggressive affirmation of territorial rights in the South China Sea, China looms as a genuine threat to Asian stability and as such warrants careful scrutiny by the United States.

### III. INDIA'S EVOLVING NAVAL FORCE

#### A. HISTORICAL AND STRATEGIC PERSPECTIVE

South Asia is unique in the sense that it's core sector is represented by only one state. In terms of size, population, resources, economic and military potential, the pivotal position of India is so striking that it accounts for most, if not all, asymmetrical forces in the region. India covers almost 78 per cent of the total area, 73 per cent of the total population and 77 per cent of the gross domestic product of the region.<sup>61</sup>

Notwithstanding the immense physical size, population and strategic centrality of India, it seems as if the United States regarded India as merely a significant afterthought throughout the duration of the Cold War. While Russia considered the friendship between India and the former Soviet Union as a foreign policy victory, the United States never took as great an interest in pursuing Cold War alliances in the region.

Indeed South Asia<sup>62</sup> on the whole was viewed by the United States and Russia, perhaps properly so, as strategically less significant in comparison to other more volatile areas of the

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<sup>61</sup> Manorama Kohli, "India and South Asian Cooperation," The Indian Journal of Political Science 49, No.3 (July-September 1988): 301-302.

<sup>62</sup> South Asia is generally accepted to include: India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, the Maldiv Islands, Sri Lanka, and Burma. This group also constitutes the entire membership of the South Asian Association of Regional Cooperation (SAARC).

East-West conflict (Eastern Europe, Northeast Asia). The nations of South Asia in turn remained non-aligned in principle throughout the Cold War. However, various subtle and not so subtle allegiances came to be common knowledge and inevitably affected the pace and manner of economic and military development that these nations were simultaneously pursuing within the context of the "Non-Aligned Movement" (NAM).

This chapter attempts to assess, within the post Cold-War context, the shifting strategic importance of India as the pivotal nation within the South Asia and Indian Ocean region. The bulk of the chapter is written from the perspective that India's future domestically, regionally, and internationally must be formulated in the context of a growing and complex domestic debate. The various factions of political, ethnic and religious groups within India serve to make the reassessment of Indian foreign policy all the more difficult.

Following a historical overview of the geographical and strategic importance of India, this chapter assesses the extent of India's influence throughout the region as well as observing what problems India may have in terms of her neighbors. It then focuses on an in-depth analysis of the recent growth of the Indian Navy. In examining the Indian Navy, the chapter concludes with an assessment of the possible use of the navy as a tool of leverage in the ongoing restructuring of India's foreign policy and possibly expanding



scope of influence throughout the region. Finally, an assessment is made of India's possible options in the post-Cold War era, especially in the Asian and Southeast Asian region.

An understanding of India's past, and more importantly its future, must first focus on the unique geographical characteristics that India possesses both in terms of its size and also in relation to the dominant position that it occupies at the crossroads of international trade and commerce in the Indian Ocean.

The Indian Ocean, and South Asia in general sits astride the Asian-Pacific rim to the east and Southwest Asia and the Middle-East to the west. India itself occupies a land mass of 1.3 million square miles in the critical central area jutting far south into the Indian ocean. Possessing an immense coastline (4800 miles) and claiming a massive 2 million square mile "Exclusive Economic Zone" (EEZ), India is clearly a maritime nation dependent upon 95% of its trade from the sea, oil supplies being the most important of those.<sup>63</sup> The importance of the sea is reinforced by the fact that overland trade and commerce has traditionally been particularly difficult with rugged mountain terrain lining India's northern and northwestern borders.

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<sup>63</sup> G.V.C. Naidu, "The Indian Navy and Southeast Asia," Contemporary Southeast Asia 13, No.1, (June 1991): 73.

Throughout its history, territorial and economic imperialism has found roots in India either as a result of military conquest or in the form of economic/political colonialism. Indeed much of the current ethnic and cultural diversity that is both a blessing and a curse for India can be traced to these various efforts at bringing India under the control of invading armies.

Invasions and conflict dot India's violent and complicated history. In 326 Alexander the Great invaded northern India with an army of 30,000 men and horses and stormed his way to the fifth river of the Punjab region essentially unopposed until rising dissatisfaction in his own ranks persuaded Alexander to leave India to the ascending Mauryan Empire.<sup>64</sup> Following this first imperial unification by the Mauryans (Buddhist) was the rise of Islam to the West and the inevitable struggle that the clash of these two diametrically opposed religions and cultures would almost certainly engender. It was also during this time period that Hinduism and Jainism came to slowly gain in popularity among the masses and Hindu legal codes would eventually come to be accepted as the norm, and indeed Hindu would in time become the dominant religion in India.

The subsequent invasions and eventual domination of India under the Mughal (Islamic) leader Babur (1526) ultimately

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<sup>64</sup> Stanley Wolpert, A New History Of India (New York: Oxford University Press, 1989), 56.

resulted in the unification, bloody as it was, of the civilized portions of northern and western India under an Islamic imperial government.

By the dawn of the sixteenth century, India was thus not only fragmented politically, but divided spiritually into many religio-philosophic camps...So desperate was the political struggle for power in the north that Western Europe's vanguard, the Portuguese, who had reached the Malabar coast in 1498 and since then returned in ever greater force to secure a toehold of trade, went unnoticed, undiscussed in Delhi.<sup>65</sup>

It is clear even at this early stage of Indian involvement in international affairs that there were some serious difficulties in determining India's status as a nation and precisely who were to be properly called "Indians." As the above quotation intimates, things were not about to become any easier as the West was quickly discerning the value of trade with, through and from India. The British colonial period would prove, however, to be radically different from other periods of imperial domination within India in so far as the remnants of the "British Raj" would eventually come to be enmeshed in the post-colonial administration of the independent government and military as India struggled to further define its proper role in the 20th century.

India itself is responsible for an imperialism of a more subtle but possibly more profound type. In terms of religious and philosophical thought India has played a major role in

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<sup>65</sup> Stanley Wolpert, 121.

spreading the tenets of both Buddhism and Hinduism from its position at the pivot point of overland and seaward trade routes. Buddhism found its way to China via the Silk Road and would eventually find deep if somewhat mutated roots in China, Japan, Korea and the whole of Asia. While Buddhism would remain a strong minority religion in India, it is in other parts of Asia that it would accumulate its greatest number of followers.

The expansion of Hinduism is traditionally seen as more closely associated with Indian influence in the insular and peninsular nations of Southeast Asia. While Hinduism was influential for a period, it would eventually be replaced by Buddhism in many of these countries, although the cultural and social remnants of Hindu customs and traditions remain. In fact with the significant exceptions of the Philippines (Catholic), and Malaysia and Indonesia (Muslim) the dominant religious affiliation in Southeast and South Asia (less India) is Buddhism.

What is striking is that while other countries have a somewhat eclectic mix of religions and cultures reflecting influences from around Asia, it is only India that has a majority of Hindu followers (83%). In fact only Bhutan (25%) and Sri Lanka (15%) have even a significant minority of Hindu.

This overview is essential and may prove enlightening when trying to discern some of the deep seated but complex problems of trust and cooperation that these nations face when

attempting to forge any type of multilateral agenda. There are, of course, more aspects to India that set her aside and apart from many of her neighbors. Functioning as the world's largest democracy is not the least of those differences.

India faces many severe challenges, not only regionally and internationally, but also in terms of successful perpetuation of the democracy under which it has lived since the adoption of a formal constitution in 1950. The system, then as now, is closely patterned on the British model with a representative Parliament and a Prime Minister with significant but closely limited powers exercised largely at the discretion of the Parliament. The government is purposely structured to provide strict central control. As opposed to the U.S. system, any residual power not specifically allocated to the state is relegated to central control. The actual amount of productive cooperation that occurs between the states and the central government is largely a function of the nature and loyalties of the dominant parties within those respective legislative bodies.<sup>60</sup>

In terms of mechanics and organization, India seems well prepared to carry on the democratic model. India faces unique and troublesome difficulties, however, in maintaining the democratic structure and concurrently ensuring that economic reforms and progress keep pace with the rest of the west and

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<sup>60</sup> Judith M. Brown, Modern India: The Origins Of An Asian Democracy (Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1985), 343.



indeed the Third World. It is in these respects that it is clearly simplistic to think of India in any light resembling the tradition of western democracies. The bottles may be the same but the wine is clearly quite different.

Fostering regime legitimacy in terms of a democratic leadership can prove particularly difficult in developing nations which are pursuing economic progress simultaneous with the adoption and maturation of a democratic system. As one observer has commented:

The conflict is compounded by the fact that in most Third World societies social control is widely diffused among many heterogeneous social organizations that over the years have developed their strategies of survival and cannot be easily molded...legitimation together with compliance and participation are seen as indicators of increasingly levels of social control by the state.<sup>67</sup>

Thus, while India may indeed possess an impressive democratic system based on the successful British model, it is clear that the existence of the system in and of itself does not guarantee that the people will either understand the system or more importantly respect its authority. The acquisition of legitimacy is critical in so far as it allows democratic norms the chance to replace and overtake long held and traditional beliefs and customs, which by their nature may have run counter to the very democratic values being sought.

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<sup>67</sup> Kuldeep Mathur, "The State And The Use Of Coercive Power In India," Asian Survey 32, No. 4 (April 1992): 339-340.

India has survived, however, as a democracy for quite a long time contrary to the predictions of a good many doomsayers. Nevertheless, to ignore the inherent difficulties in ensuring the survival of the democracy would be to dismiss a fundamental challenge to India's future. These facts taken in the context of the other more tangible social and ethnic difficulties to be addressed later in the chapter, provide the bulk of India's domestic challenges and have a direct and significant impact on the conduct of foreign relations.

In terms of the Indian military, the ties to the British example are even more pronounced than in the civilian government. This has occasionally caused consternation among government officials who have felt that the military is too British. The Indian Administrative Service (IAS) (the post-independence version of the Indian Civil Service) continues to this day to train and recruit in the tradition of the "raj".

English remained the medium of recruitment and training, military lifestyle and social conventions remained; as did a tradition of elegant professionalism and career orientation, and non-involvement in political matters.... The legacy of an apolitical army has been of great significance in India's very existence as a democracy, in sharp contrast to the experience of newly independent territories in other continents, or in neighboring Pakistan.<sup>68</sup>

The degree of separation that the military establishment enjoys from the political system is clearly an advantage for

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<sup>68</sup> Judith M. Brown, 346.

the present day leadership in India. It is for this reason that the Indian government is particularly scrupulous in keeping the military clearly delineated and as a separate entity from the internal paramilitary and police forces that are used so extensively to suppress domestic violence and dissent and even border conflicts that may have convoluted origins and involve multifarious domestic issues.

Pursued in conjunction with (it is hoped) the healthy survival and perpetuation of the Indian democratic system is the simultaneous quest for economic expansion and improved technological advancements with aid received from the advanced economies of the world. While this is a traditional if somewhat hackneyed plea of developing countries, in India the dream has at least in part become a reality.

In terms of economic potential, India poses a paradox. Possessing a huge professional middle class, it is capable of competing in a number of international high technology and service sectors quite well. Superimposed upon this optimistic outlook, however, are the devastating population and hunger crises that continue to plague the entire country and serve to sap much of the potential for economic growth and resource development that might otherwise be observed.

As of the present period India functions extremely well in producing and exporting goods to other Third World countries. While this is clearly beneficial in terms of balance of trade and employment, in the long term it spells only stagnation and

possibly even economic regression in terms of competing with the west. India needs to streamline the transfer of technologies from the drawing board to the factory, if it is to hope to compete with other major technological powers.<sup>69</sup>

India's economic links with the Indian Ocean countries are developing slowly, but in the line of ascent. Suffice it to point out that India is on the list of principal importers of 17 out of 27 countries of the area. It actively exports capital, both public and private. Old cultural ties with many countries, including the presence of many Indian residents abroad, should also be taken into account. All this facilitates the expansion of economic links.<sup>70</sup>

India's economy shows signs of both hope and despair depending upon the aspect one looks at. India's GDP growth for 1991-92 was 2.5%, with 3.5% anticipated for 1992-93. While this represents modest growth, GDP per capita remains a dismal \$350 (\$ U.S.).<sup>71</sup> Additionally, India's balance of trade ballooned to negative \$7.29 billion (\$ U.S.) in 1990. India has amassed a huge budget deficit that absorbed 8.5% of the total GDP in 1991.<sup>72</sup> Meanwhile, the Indian economy has evolved to

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<sup>69</sup> M.V. Bratersky and S.I. Lunyov, "India At The End Of The Century: Transformation Into An Asian Regional Power," Asian Survey 30, No. 10, (October 1990): 930.

<sup>70</sup> M.V. Bratersky and S.I. Lunyov, 940.

<sup>71</sup> "Asia 1992 Yearbook," published by the Far Eastern Economic Review, January 1992, 6.

<sup>72</sup> "1992 Annual Reference Edition," Asia-Pacific Defence Reporter, January 1992, 43.

the point where 40% of the economy is accounted for by the service sector.

The government strives somewhat successfully to keep politics and economic policy secularized and consciously separate from the quagmire of religious and cultural influences that could quite easily impede progress within the international market.

The Indian government makes a conscious effort at pursuing pragmatic and secular solutions to a wide range of problems so as to avoid the appearance of favoring one ethnic or religious group over another. In this sense the democratic model lends itself well to the fair application of policy within the diverse Indian social context. In fact the government has often gone so far along planned development that there has been some criticism from the west that the India leadership was tending toward socialist policies, with the concepts of merit and entrepreneurship being neglected. While this accusation may or may not be fair, what is clear is that India has a unique form of democracy that has matured in the context of India's complex ethnic and cultural considerations.

Indeed, it is the particularly difficult task of the Indian government to balance an inordinate number of diverse domestic concerns and interest groups with the needs of an ascending international economic and military power. The daunting task of forging a domestic consensus within Indian society and in keeping with the existing democratic norms,



stands as the major challenge to India at the end of the Cold War and serves as the context for the examination to which we now turn.

## **B. INDIA'S FACES THE UNCERTAINTY OF POST-COLD WAR ASIA**

...Indian concerns are predominant in South Asia, especially over those of external powers who must not be allowed to exploit crises to enhance their own positions in the region. By implication, any attempt by another South Asian nation to invite such outside intervention will be considered hostile to India and grounds for Indian retaliation. In short, Indian security policy in South Asia is based on denying external powers a regional foothold, with military force if necessary.<sup>73</sup>

This description is a concise if somewhat incomplete assessment of the approach to regional and national security that India pursues. India has traditionally been disparaged by internal and external critics with failing to adequately elucidate the background and theory supporting stated foreign policy goals. It is clear that progress has at times been achieved in this area, but the criticism remains that those successes were more as a result of chance than design. "Ambivalence and flexibility" seemed to have traditionally characterized Indian security and defense policy.<sup>74</sup>

In terms of regional confrontation, the long-term and partially on-going conflicts with China and Pakistan have had

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<sup>73</sup> Devin T. Hagerty, "India's Regional Security Doctrine," Asian Survey 31, No.4 (April 1991): 352.

<sup>74</sup> Devin T. Hagerty, 351.

a significant impact on the conduct of both the Indian defense planners and upon India's regional security doctrine. The conflicts revolve primarily around border and ethnic conflicts that arise at least partially out of a medium power insecurity on the part of India that is implied in the above quotation.

Sino-Indian relations have been variously marked by periods of tension and attempted resolution since the 1950's. This seeming contradiction is indicative of the apprehensive but earnest manner in which both countries have approached the diplomatic table in attempts to settle their various disputes during this time-frame. Gains that may have been earned at the bargaining table (Nehru's five principles of "peaceful coexistence," for example)<sup>75</sup> have nonetheless often been erased by violent encounters, of varying intensity, usually occurring along their common borders.

Their primary dispute centers on the contested border territories to the West in the area of the Karakoram Pass, and to the Northeast at the British established "McMahon Line" in Arunachel Pradesh, East of Bhutan. Animosity and mutual distrust existed, however, even before this dispute manifested itself in the Sino-Indian border conflict of 1962. In fact

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<sup>75</sup> The five principles (panch shila) of "Peaceful Coexistence" were proposed by Indian Prime Minister Nehru to the Chinese Foreign Minister Zhou Enlai in 1954. They were: mutual respect for each others territorial integrity & sovereignty; nonaggression noninterference; equality & mutual benefit; and peaceful coexistence. This was seen as a real breakthrough in relations only to be done in by the border dispute impasse.

"...China had been befriending Pakistan since the Bandung Conference in 1955.<sup>76</sup>" Chinese alignment with Pakistan could only serve to make the Indians more apprehensive about China and its possible expansionist aspirations for the region. The Pakistani affiliation with China, coupled with India's subsequent humiliating loss at the disputed border of Pakistani held Kashmir in October of 1962, combined to produce a bitterness toward the Chinese that lingers in the minds of many Indians to this day.

In a more fundamental sense, the Indians see themselves at an insurmountable geographic and strategic disadvantage with respect to China. Up until the recently undertaken Indian naval buildup, India had never posed any threat to China itself:

China is a major security concern for India: arguably even the principal one. Chinese military strength lies close to India's main centre of population and China holds territory claimed by India. But by itself, India is a relatively minor security concern for China. India's military strength sets far from China's heartlands, and weighs little compared with other threats to China's interest<sup>77</sup>

During the Sino-Indian border conflict of 1962, Nehru's army was getting so badly trounced that he temporarily abandoned the guiding principle of "Non-alignment" and turned

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<sup>76</sup> A.R. Basu, "India's China Policy In Historical Perspective," Contemporary Southeast Asia 13, No.1, (June 1991): 103.

<sup>77</sup> Barry Buzan and Gowher Rizvi, South Asian Insecurity And The Great Powers (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1986), 11.

to the United States in desperation for arms and personnel, even though the United States had been openly shipping arms to the Pakistani's since 1954,<sup>78</sup> and had been at least tacitly treating China as a global power which had served to compound Indian feelings of resentment.

This graphic example points to a genuine Indian dedication toward stemming Chinese intrusion into India, even at the sake of appearing to align itself with one or more Western powers. "Underlying most Indian views of China is a vein of resentment that the PRC is perceived as a greater factor than India in world affairs."<sup>79</sup> This inferiority complex cannot be overstated or disregarded as India continues to strive toward self-definition and a meaningful role in the region.

The contested border has been the major point of Sino-Indian dispute throughout the intervening decades since the mid-1950's. With the close of this century and the end of the Cold War, the rivalries that have historically marked the Sino-Indian relationship are likely to manifest themselves in the struggle for dominance in the Indian Ocean and Southeast Asian maritime regions. In addition to their bilateral disputes, the internal dynamics that have and continue to shape both these countries must be taken into account when

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<sup>78</sup> Barry Buzan and Gowher Rizvi, 104.

<sup>79</sup> Steven I. Levine, 141.

assessing the role each country may take in the near future in terms of regional foreign policy.

India's internal ethnic and religious strife has been, and continues to be, an exceedingly destabilizing factor for the nation and the entire region. Any attempted change in foreign policy or global status must be addressed in view of these problems. The government has faced domestic opposition in the past as it has asserted itself in regards to smaller South Asian nations (Sri Lanka, Nepal, and the Maldives for example).

The larger nations of Pakistan and China are given preeminence by most analysts as having the most discernable effect upon the formulation of Indian foreign policy. Nonetheless, it is terms of Indian interactions with the smaller nations of South Asia where there has been a tendency to display an "...increased willingness in the late 1980's to assert India's greater power directly and dramatically in smaller neighboring countries.<sup>80</sup>"

No better example of Indian ambivalence can be seen than in Sri Lanka and the handling of the Tamil separatist movement. Waffling between open support for the "Tamil Tigers" and a professed willingness to mediate a peaceful settlement with the Sinhalese majority in power, India succeeded in only confusing the issue. When India feared a

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<sup>80</sup> Devin T. Hagerty, 352.



backlash in their own Tamil Nadu region if the separatist were suppressed, Rajiv Ghandi sent relief supplies to the rebels in the form of the Indian Air Force. The embarrassing withdrawal of Indian troops in 1987 after the low intensity violence had continued to wage on, left in doubt India's own ability to handle with skill and diplomacy relatively minor difficulties in "it's own backyard."<sup>81</sup>

This particular illustration provides an excellent example of the many inputs which come into play when Indian leaders try to formulate functional foreign policy goals. The obvious factor in Sri Lanka is the ethnic problem. India felt that it was its duty to ensure the safety of it's "overseas" brothers. The Tamils were not Indian citizens, rather they were related ethnically to a vocal group within Indian society. It is difficult to envision another country where this type of response would be so willingly adopted.

At the same time India felt a need to demonstrate its ability to function as the mature regional superpower and effect a peaceful diplomatic settlement to the problem regardless of the parties involved. Overarching these concerns was the Indian fear that if a settlement was not reached, other non-regional actors might be requested to come to the aid of the legitimate Sinhalese government. To India this would be the ultimate embarrassment. The result was, and

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<sup>81</sup> Devin T. Hagerty, 356.

often has been, the seeming ambivalence referred to above. Another example was the Gulf Crisis and India's similarly equivocal response in terms of siding with the coalition or remaining impartial to Iraq's invasion of Kuwait.

The fact remains that India has been a group of societies and cultures far longer than it has been a unified nation. The difficulties faced by the government in instilling legitimization having often failed, lead inevitably to the use of coercive force and harsher treatment of dissenters in the society. It is in this sense that India faces different and deeper problems of consensus building than do other democracies.

The political mechanisms of competition and voting exist, but they are increasingly being overwhelmed by force and coercion. Failures of legitimization of state power and inability to resolve political conflicts do not appear to be consequences of poor economic performance alone. They lie at the very root of the historical and social processes of state and nation building.<sup>82</sup>

In fact it is sometimes difficult to distinguish between domestic and regional problems in India. The other nations of South Asia have so much in common with India that this commonality sometimes tends to lead to a mistrust of India's overpowering economic and military strength. SAARC has been long touted as a vehicle for solving some of the difficulties of the member nations while at the same time strengthening the

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<sup>82</sup> Kuldeep Mathur, 349.

entire group in the eyes of the west by combining resources and competing around the world.

In the eyes of the Indians SAARC could function well in terms of "...reaffirming the zone of direct Indian interests and legitimizing India's leadership in the region.<sup>33</sup>" This concept does not sit well with some of India's neighbors, although there is some confidence that with India's increased involvement and economic trade with it's neighbors that SAARC could possibly become "...if not a military than an economic and political bloc of the ASEAN type.<sup>34</sup>"

It would clearly be in the interest of the region to further strengthen the economic ties and cooperation between the members of SAARC. While India would clearly be the key player in such a revitalization, it must also at the same time take great pains to assure her South Asian counterparts that Indian goals are not economic imperialism and expansion and that India is capable and willing to assume a partnership role vice a leadership role in this enterprise. Taking the above noted examples of regional strife in which India has played an antagonistic role, however, the possibility of assuaging regional concerns over Indian intentions may prove to be difficult indeed.

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<sup>33</sup> M.V. Bratersky and S.I. Lunyov, 929.

<sup>34</sup> M.V. Bratersky and S.I. Lunyov, 929.

The restrengthening of SAARC is an example of the new type of fresh thinking that India feels is necessary in the post Cold-War era. Whether regional intricacies and long held mistrust can be overcome will provide the true test of success. For it is clear that absent an East-West conflict to be "non-aligned" against, there has appeared a lack of direction and muddiness in the waters of international relationships and in Indian foreign policy.

While pursuing possibly improved regional cooperation and discourse, India is simultaneously posturing its military forces to similarly take the lead in regional security issues. This shift in regional strategy has in fact been evolving for some time, but with the end of the Cold War regional buildups around the world are going to come under more close international scrutiny. It is to an examination and assessment of the Indian Navy to which we now turn.

#### **C. INDIAN TOOLS OF LEVERAGE: THE GROWTH OF THE INDIAN NAVY**

Most of the recent acquisitions by the Indian navy are of an offensive nature and have power projection capability. The Indian navy is the largest among the Indian Ocean littoral states and the seventh largest in the world. If the naval officials succeed in their ambitions for the Indian navy, it would become the fourth largest in the world.<sup>85</sup>

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<sup>85</sup> G.V.C. Naidu, 73.

In terms of military strength, India dominates the region in similar magnitude to its geographical and economic might. The other nations of the region are well aware of this dominance, and this supremacy serves as a double-edged sword for India. India faces the dual task of quelling smaller regional nations' fears of Indian military expansion and domination while at the same time preparing to meet the challenges of the rapidly transforming regional power structure.

In essence India must face three separate directions at the same time when reassessing its security posture. It must first address domestic groups that do not desire India to become involved in any foreign disputes in keeping with the traditional tenets of non-alignment. Then India needs to be concerned about its neighbors and their perceptions of Indian aggressiveness and expansion. Some regional powers are similarly concerned about preserving the non-aligned status quo, and additionally they fear Indian domination leading to their own voices and concerns being given less credence on the world stage.

Lastly, India must be concerned about how it is perceived by the rest of the world, and specifically the United States. India has a deep desire to be seen as a major international player, and like it or not, the United States is the sole remaining superpower, and as such will provide much of the backdrop for the conduct of future international



relationships. In pursuit of this position it is India's belief that the coveted status of "international power" can only come with both military and economic prowess. It is through naval power projection that India plans to pursue military prominence and international prestige.

Similar to the Chinese, the Indians intend to make the 1990's the decade in which they emerge "as a major regional power of Asia."<sup>36</sup> To facilitate this transformation, they also intend to project their naval power as the bulwark of their regional policy. India, however, unlike China, already has a large and powerful navy, rivalled in all of Asia only by the Japanese.

In addition to a qualitative and quantitatively superior naval force, India has the additionally important trait of a rich naval tradition. The Indian naval heritage has been inherited practically whole-cloth from the British. After independence, Royal Navy officers even served in the Indian Navy for a period of time. The traditions and customs of the Royal Navy have been enthusiastically incorporated into the present day Indian Navy. Additionally, the British and the Indians have been conducting joint naval exercises and the Indian fleet has traditionally looked to Great Britain for the furnishing of "hand-me-down" naval vessels. This important aspect of Indian naval power carries over into the methods of

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<sup>36</sup> M.V. Bratersky and S.I. Lunyov, 927.

training of sailors and officers and technical expertise, and as a result leads to the Indian Navy more closely resembling a traditional western navy than a Third World navy.

In terms of naval hardware and weapons systems, India is clearly the leader in South Asia. Since the 1970's India has been engaged in a naval revitalization and modernization program that has witnessed the naval budget being increased some 200 fold in 40 years and accounting for 13% of the entire defense budget.<sup>37</sup> This dramatic increase in funding over a long period of time has resulted in the current overall strength of the Indian Navy.

The Indian Navy owns two aircraft carriers of the vertical take-off (VSTOL) variety; the "Vikrant" (formerly the HMS Hercules, built in 1943), and the 23 year old "Viraat" (ex-HMS Hermes).<sup>38</sup> While these fixed-wing and large helicopter capable vessels are getting old, the Indians have been faithfully upgrading them with new systems and progressive modernization. Nonetheless, the "Vikrant" is "showing her age, and needs replacing as a matter of urgency."<sup>39</sup> Delays in settling on the final terms of a contract with the French for the construction of a third carrier has now put in jeopardy not only that acquisition, but

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<sup>37</sup> M.V. Bratersky and S.I. Lunyov, 936.

<sup>38</sup> Anthony Preston, "India's Naval Expansion," Asian Defence Journal, September 1992: 66.

<sup>39</sup> Anthony Preston, 66.

puts into question the ability of the "Viraat" to outlast the waiting period for her follow-on replacement.

The Indian government has recently made overtures about purchasing two of the remaining Russian aircraft carriers, "Admiral Kuznetsov" and "Varyag" (the one the Chinese would also like). While no deals have been finalized, this would certainly help India's problem of replacing her aging carriers.<sup>90</sup>

India's submarine force includes 7 "Foxtrot" boats acquired in the late 60' and early 70's, and the newer 8 "Kilo" submarines have all entered the fleet and are phasing out the older "Foxtrots."<sup>91</sup> Early hope over a German co-production contract to indigenously build four "type 1500" conventional submarines, has led to production slowdowns as a result of poor training and lack of experience within India's industrial base.<sup>92</sup>

The Indians also had leased a nuclear-powered SSGN ("Charlie" class) in 1988 from Russia for a three year trial basis, but an offer to extend the terms of that lease was not taken up by the Indians and the submarine was returned to Vladivostok.<sup>93</sup> India has, however, invested in active

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<sup>90</sup> Anthony Preston, 68.

<sup>91</sup> "The Military Balance 1991-92," 145.

<sup>92</sup> Anthony Preston, 68.

<sup>93</sup> Anthony Preston, 69.

research and development of an indigenously produced, nuclear-powered submarine. This infant project, called the "advanced technology vehicle," is "reasonably well funded" and "the project has priority over a new aircraft carrier."<sup>94</sup>

India's surface fleet is particularly impressive. The largest of these ships are the 5 "Rajput" class destroyers (formerly "Kashin" class Russian destroyers). Armed with 2 "Goa" sea-to-air (SAM) missiles, 4 "Styx" surface-to-surface (SSM) missiles systems, and capable of embarking an ASW helicopter, these vessels exemplify the heavily armed ships that were the signature of the former Soviet fleet in the 1970' and 80's. Of the 21 various escort frigates, the 3 "Godavari" class frigates are the newest and most impressive. Capable of embarking 2 "Sea-King" size ASW helicopters, they are also armed with "Styx" SSM's, a quadruple "Gecko" point defense system, anti-submarine torpedoes, and German supplied sonar.<sup>95</sup> These carrier escorts are quite capable of protecting the Indian aircraft carriers, as well as carrying out independent small scale operations.

In addition to these various naval capabilities, the Indian Navy possesses 40 assorted patrol and coastal combatants, many armed with "Styx" SSM's. The Indians have no minelaying capability, but they do have 22 mine countermeasure

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<sup>94</sup> Captain Richard Sharpe, RN, ed., Janes Fighting Ships 1992-93 (London: Butler and Tanner Ltd., 1992), 268.

<sup>95</sup> Anthony Preston, 69.

craft in service. The Indian amphibious ability is quite limited, with only two relatively large "Magar" class LST's.

India's navy is clearly much more impressive than China. India has, however, traditionally lacked any consistent maritime strategy aimed at putting this rapidly expanding navy to effective use.<sup>96</sup> This problem looms as a problem for India, as the rest of the region and all of Asia try to discern Indian intentions for this obviously dominant naval force.

India has historically sought simply to limit external threats, i.e., superpowers, from infringing on South Asian territory, in line with its traditional pursuit of political non-alignment. However, India's maritime concerns have grown over the years and the navy has had to grow in conjunction with those concerns. India now finds herself ranging farther and farther from the shores of the mainland, slowly assuming a greater and more powerful maritime role within the region.

Protection of maritime trade is India's major concern. "Nearly 98 per cent of India's trade (over US\$20 billion) is sea-borne, which includes about 40 percent of it's crude oil imports.<sup>97</sup>" Along with protection of this trade, which entails the protection of the oil rich offshore installation "Bombay High," they have long been considered innovators and

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<sup>96</sup> G.V.C. Naidu, 79.

<sup>97</sup> G.V.C. Naidu, 78.



investment leaders in a potentially lucrative seabed mining system that by some estimates could be functional by the end of the 1990's<sup>98</sup> (clearly aimed at gaining rights to any offshore oil-wells that may be discovered). These interests, in addition to protecting Indian coastal fishing rights, are all considered legitimate naval concerns.

Overshadowing these largely "domestic" roles for the Indian Navy is the emerging need to present a sea-denial and sea-control capability in the interest of posing itself as the regional maritime power. Many of India's naval improvements have been in response to a perceived buildup of technically advanced land and sea forces on the part of Pakistan. The degree of historical animosity between these two countries cannot be overemphasized, and that situation can only get worse in the future as India and Pakistan are free to pursue continued military acquisitions after the Cold War.

Pakistan's military modernization (seen by India as aided by China and the United States) has left India vulnerable to missile attacks from Pakistani naval and shore facilities. It is this concern, and the desire to prevent further and more explicit foreign encroachment into the region, that drives India's present naval modernization forward.

This is clearly part of the reason that India has established a forward base of operations for its submarine

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<sup>98</sup> Majeed Akhtar, "Indian Perspectives in the 1990's", Asian Survey 30, No. 11 (November 1990): 1094.

fleet at Port Blair in the Andaman Islands. Such a naval base almost certainly is meant to send a message of regional intentions to not only the nations of ASEAN, but also to China and Japan. Similarly to these other regional powers, India has no intention of being omitted from the inevitably emerging power structure in and around Asia. By posturing its naval forces as capable of sustained operations in and around the Southeast Asian area, India has in effect changed the regional balance of power. Combined with the emergence of the Chinese navy and the growth of Japanese naval capabilities, Indian submarine patrols can only serve to heighten the sense of anxiety that the nations of ASEAN are experiencing in terms of future regional security conditions.

While India's naval employment may seem somewhat offensive in nature, it must be remembered that India sincerely believes that it is functioning as a "...countervailing power in the area, providing a stabilizing influence in the turbulent region."<sup>99</sup> This role is not fully understood or certainly accepted by many nations in South and Southeast Asia or indeed around the world. It is clear that India's inability to formulate clear and publicly stated policy goals for its burgeoning navy has left the region and the world wondering what India's intentions are in terms of employing its emerging naval power.

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<sup>99</sup> Majeed Akhtar, 1098.

Recent Indian rhetoric has become increasingly resolute in their determination to lead the region. They see themselves as preeminent and wish other South Asian nations to join them in their quest to expand economically, while at the same time ensuring regional integrity in terms of western powers. The emerging competition from the Chinese and Japanese, coupled with the possible departure from the area by the United States, would seem to compel India to make explicit its desires and intentions for the region.

While economic malaise and domestic violence may cause temporary budgetary restraints hitting all the Indian armed forces with required cutbacks, it is clear that India's long term goals of power projection and sea-control are best served by a strong navy and that the navy will not be neglected.

Assuming an annual inflation rate of 11 per cent, the overall cut to the [1992] defence budget is 6 per cent in real terms. Within this budget, the Army sustained a cut in real terms of about 9 per cent, the Air Force sustained a cut in real terms of 7 per cent, while the Navy was granted an increase in real terms of about 4 per cent.<sup>100</sup>

In 1991, India allotted \$9.03 billion (constant U.S. 1988 dollars) for military expenditures, accounting for 3.3% of total GDP, a decrease from \$9.6 billion in 1989.<sup>101</sup> While

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<sup>100</sup> "1992 Annual Reference Edition," Asia-Pacific Defence Reporter, 43.

<sup>101</sup> "SIPRI Yearbook 1992: World Armaments and Disarmaments," published by the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute, 1992, 260.

funding may have recently dipped below recent high-water marks, the overall trend has been to slowly bolster the capabilities and mission orientation of the navy to a more "blue-water" function. What should be looked at is not the funding or levels of spending for the navy, rather it is significant to observe a trend away from the traditional constabulary/coastal patrol type naval forces to the truly westernized type of power projection capabilities.

In accomplishing a clear description of their intentions for leading the region India would need first and foremost to address the concerns of their own internal fractious political contingents, as well as address the concerns of the smaller regional nations and indeed the rest of the world, all of whom have an significant stake in the region. If approached within a regionally cooperative and non-expansionist framework, India could take a leadership role while not necessarily overpowering or shunting their neighbors aside. Posing their naval force as the vehicle for that leadership can be extremely effective if a regional understanding and appreciation for Indian intentions is attained.

Indeed, that is the crux of the subject under discussion: what are India's goals for the future? While it is not at all clear that even the Indians are decided on this issue, it will be helpful to examine the range of options open to Indian as the 21st century approaches.

#### D. INDIA'S OPTIONS EXAMINED

India's security considerations are not confined to its immediate neighborhood but span a wider area. Measures undertaken by India to cope with its concerns, coupled with the lifting of many financial constraints, led to the modernization of its armed forces. This has, understandably, led to an increase in threat perceptions among India's smaller neighbors and has created a feeling that India is out to become a regionally dominant minisuperpower.<sup>102</sup>

It is this general feeling of apprehension on the part of its neighbors that India must aggressively undertake to alleviate if it is to function in an effective regional leadership role. The debate around India's future rages within India itself, and the debate takes the principles of the NAM as a starting point and defines any future policy stance or international agenda on how far removed from those principles any new policy might be. Some want complete departure and others complete adherence, and of course there are those who propose a cautious middle-ground.

The fundamental changes in the international power structure in general will necessarily affect India's future, even more so now that the Cold War is over and India can no longer sit on the sidelines of global politics. The mere possession of an impressive military infrastructure and the fielding a formidable armed forces no longer admits a nation automatically to the elite collection of international powers.

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<sup>102</sup> Majeed Akhtar, 1084.



Today, in a greater sense than during the Cold War, economic prowess is as much or more an integral part of the entire definition of national strength.

The changing nature of the interdependence of the international economic market was undoubtedly taking shape in the latter part of the Cold War, but went largely unnoticed as the U.S. was actively pursuing the escalation and anticipated conclusion of the U.S.-Soviet standoff. With that struggle ended, the rest of the world is realizing that absent that conflict there may be a return to a more "normal" type of parochial approach toward the pursuit of individual national interests and policy agenda.

For India, this fact strikes home with particular force. Being non-aligned during the Cold War, India was kept largely out of the ideological fray. Due to this non-alignment, however, India was never considered a reliable ally of the United States against the communist threat. India's position now that the Cold War is over, provides little or no leverage in requesting preferential treatment or development aid from the United States.

India's economy is in a critical transition phase from dreadfully backward toward a degree of modest growth in development. India will be hard pressed to keep pace with the rest of the world when other fully developed countries are free to pursue more limited self-serving economic goals. Absent some degree of outside assistance, this fragile

progress will be difficult to maintain in the face of the overwhelming population and hunger crises.

It is within this context of pressing and complex domestic issues that the current debate concerning the shape of India's future international role is taking place. Nowhere has this been more apparent than in India's response to the recent Gulf crisis:

The Gulf crisis acted as a catalyst in the ongoing debate in India's foreign policy community over the formulation of a policy to meet the challenges and opportunities offered by the post-Cold War era. While some commentators paid tribute to [Indian Prime Minister] Chandra Shekhar for 'bold' and 'pragmatic' foreign policy decisions, others scorned his apparent 'tilt' toward the United States by allowing the aircraft refueling and thus abandoning Indian foreign policy's traditional elements of nonalignment and Third World solidarity.<sup>103</sup>

There are four primary options which India may choose from in terms of its future within the region and globally. Firstly, India may choose to stand steadfastly by the principles of the Non-Aligned Movement and pursue that creed in terms of refusing to be even minutely involved in other nations affairs, so as to not be seen as "interventionist". This is a rather unrealistic approach, especially in light of the types of changes around the world mentioned above, and India's recent altercations with its neighbors in Sri Lanka and the Maldives. There are, however, a small number of

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<sup>103</sup> J. Mohan Malik, "India's Response to the Gulf Crisis: Implications for Indian Foreign Policy," Asian Survey 31, No. (September 1991): 854.

dissenters within India who would espouse such a course of action.

Secondly, there is what Mohan Malik calls the "realist" approach. The "realists" were quick to point out that the end of the Cold War provides India with some unique and important opportunities in terms of trade and cooperation with previously "aligned" countries. "One was the opportunity to wean the U.S. away from its traditional ally, Pakistan."<sup>104</sup>

It is this school of thought that lends itself to the realities of the end of the East-West conflict. In this context, India would model itself as the regional leader and pursue the formation of close cooperation with other "powers that be" around the Asian-Pacific region. By posturing itself as the moderate and cooperative regional authority, China, Japan, ASEAN, and the United States would more likely give India respect and implicit power within the region. This option may also prove problematic in that it assumes India would not provoke regional disturbances and additionally that it be capable and willing to deliver results in terms of economic cooperation and peaceful settlement of small scale disputes. India's recent track record does not bode well for such possibilities.

The structural context of this type of power redefinition within the region might fall under the United Nations, vice

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<sup>104</sup> J. Mohan Malik, 855.

the SAARC. For some, the U.N. is seen as a more worldwide organization perhaps capable (lately) of forging a growing variety of agreements in terms of a wide range of issues. It would seem as if SAARC simply were not designed for such a role. Extremely pragmatic as this approach is, it is nonetheless seen as painfully nearsighted and too opportunistic.

The third option takes the form of a low key unilateral expansion (militarily and economically) on the part of India toward Southeast Asia as well as the South Asian region in general. This option, is seen as a complete break from the past, and while it has only a handful of advocates within India, it is seen by India's more suspicious neighbors as the approach being secretly pursued. This fear is based on emotion more than an observed ability of India to succeed in such an ambitious policy as it would not be able to muster the economic and domestic stamina to forge this type of unpopular policy. Not to mention that India would clearly be overmatched in Southeast Asia not only by the United States, but also by the Chinese and Japanese.

The last option addresses another school of thought that Malik mentions, and that is the "traditionalists." The "traditionalists" strive to redefine the guiding philosophy of "non-alignment" to make it more compatible with the somewhat

murky future of international relationships.<sup>105</sup> The "traditionalists" point out that the apparent lack of a clear cut division within international beliefs and systems, does not necessarily mean that condition will remain in place forever.

This is a faithfully Third World approach and thus attractive to those who are firm believers in the foundational principles of the NAM. In this view, the United States is simply more dangerous now than ever before because it can impose its will around the world without fear of reprisal, and the NAM must steadfastly stand against this peaceful expansion of American influence and will.

This last "traditionalist" option is the one that India most likely will adopt. Above all else, it takes a cautious "case by case" approach to international developments and decides within the context of the immediate circumstances what the proper role/response should be for India. This in fact makes good sense, especially in India's case. The rest of the world is in essence following the same path, although with varying degrees of success. Confusion and "muddling through" seem to be the watchwords of the 1990's.

This perspective of distrust of the United States is remarkably similar to the emerging stance of the Chinese leadership. Both India and China, to differing degrees, fear

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<sup>105</sup> J. Mohan Malik, 856.



an hegemonic America in the wake of the Cold War. While these fears may or may not be justified, those fears are certainly informing the basis of future foreign policy in both countries. As has been examined, part of that reassessment is manifesting itself in terms of the bolstering of both Chinese and Indian naval capabilities. These maritime modernizations, taken in conjunction with apprehension about American intentions in both capitals, would suggest that both China and India are preparing, albeit independently, for a possible challenge to the U.S., perhaps a naval challenge, in their respective areas of influence.

This ominous possibility taken in combination with Indian naval expansion toward and into Southeast Asia, serves to only raise the tension level of all the actors involved. While the U.S. has little to immediately fear from the Indian Navy, the incremental escalation of military utilization by India, China and Japan should give American policy makers pause.

For India, faced with complex domestic difficulties and regional apprehension, adoption of the traditionalist's newly defined role of "non-alignment" would clearly aid in bringing into focus the near-term goals. With this approach, however, India will make no progress toward easing Asian fears or lowering regional tensions.

With the Indian Navy moving east to the Nicobar Islands, the Chinese navy moving south and west to the Spratly and Paracel Islands, and the Japanese navy possibly resurgent as

a result of American retrenchment, it is no wonder that the nations of ASEAN feel as if they are caught in an international pinchers movement, with their resource rich and strategically pivotal region at the center of a contest they can scarcely influence.

#### IV. THE FUTURE JAPANESE NAVAL POTENTIAL

##### A. CURRENT PERSPECTIVES

The US-Japan relationship remains key to our Asian security strategy. In the past, Japan's strategic location served as a barrier to Soviet aggression; today, US forces and Japanese Self Defense Forces maintain their vigilance as political changes follow their course in Russia and Northeast Asia. US forces in Japan provide for stability throughout the region, and remain an essential element of the deterrent against North Korean adventurism. The continuing US presence in Japan and the strength of the US-Japan security relationship are reassuring to many nations as well as to Japan.<sup>106</sup>

Widespread usage of the term "Pacific Century" has been in vogue for a number of years now, and while there is a certain amount of rhetoric that necessarily attaches itself to the legitimate concerns raised by this idea it is clear that the implied threat some see in this phrase is seen to be emanating from Japan. There are indeed some global implications to this forecast that demand close and careful scrutiny in terms of regional and global reassessment as the dawn of the 21st approaches.

Of the would-be world powers, none seems to be more feared or misunderstood throughout the region and quite possibly the world than Japan. As a powerful island nation Japan stands

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<sup>106</sup> U.S. Department of Defense, A Strategic Framework for the Asian-Pacific Rim, 4.

unique in the region in contrast to China and India. This insular nature combined with immense economic prowess is instructive in explaining some of the isolation felt within Japan. Similar to the China, Japan is partially if not primarily responsible for fostering the feeling of mistrust and the atmosphere of misunderstanding that plagues Japan's relations with its Asian neighbors.

Regional fears of Japan are largely a result of historical animosity arising from Japanese military conduct before and during World War II. While these events were not the responsibility of any leaders currently in power, the repercussions of various historical atrocities are nonetheless sincerely felt and need to be acknowledged by Japan.<sup>107</sup> Intimately tied to regional and global thoughts of Japan is the uncertainty surrounding the U.S.-Japan relationship and how that relationship is similarly undergoing change. Asian memories of Japanese military domination fuel the widespread fears of a resurgent Japanese military capability independent of the American security partnership that has existed since the end of World War II.

Lee Kuan Yew...said recently that it was unfortunate that Japan has not followed the example of Germany in being 'open and frank about the atrocities and horrors committed' in the war. He added that because Japan did not educate its young people about the behavior of Japanese forces in East Asia, 'the victims suspect and

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<sup>107</sup> A.W. Grazebrook, "Maritime Potential No Cause For Concern," Asia-Pacific Defence Reporter, (September 1991): 27.

fear that Japan does not think these acts were wrong, and that there is no genuine Japanese change of heart.'<sup>108</sup>

Widespread regional economic success and an apprehension of the future international power structure has led many nations within Asia to seek to improve their military capabilities. In some instances when many smaller Asian nations assess their respective regional security status they come to the conclusion that they have too long neglected the modernization of individual armed forces in concerted efforts to develop their heretofore underdeveloped economies. The nations of ASEAN are only now beginning to feel a genuine sense of urgency to attain some modicum of military parity with the larger regional powers, and the standard by which all nations in Asia judge themselves (militarily and economically) is without a doubt Japan.

As China and India continue to shift their respective regional outlooks toward protecting their seaward interests, the smaller nations within ASEAN are engaged in what some have called a "slow motion arms race" in preparation for the perceived period of regional uncertainty.<sup>109</sup>

Japan has steadily improved its military capabilities since the end of World War II while in their view carefully

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<sup>108</sup> Michael Richardson, "Regional Mistrust Increasing," Asia-Pacific Defence Reporter, April-May 1992, 34.

<sup>109</sup> Tim Huxley, "South-East Asia's Arm's Race: Some Notes on Recent Developments," Arms Control II, No. 1 (May 1990): 70.



observing the spirit of the American imposed constitution. Most importantly for this region, the Japanese Maritime Self-Defense Force (MSDF) is clearly the most modern and powerful within Asia and additionally possesses the "most sophisticated organization in the region...."<sup>110</sup>

This chapter will examine the MSDF from both a historical and contemporary standpoint, in addition to examining recent MSDF developments from the U.S. and Asian perspectives. By examining the types of crafts and technological capabilities seen in Japan's maritime acquisitions we can gain insights into the intended uses for those weapons and hence project how those intentions may be reflected in Japan's overarching goals for their own foreign policy pursuits.

Within this region of narrow, heavily travelled straits and mineral rich seabeds, a maritime force must necessarily be the true foundation of any national military strength. The rapid growth in terms of acquiring naval weapons systems and vessels throughout this region would seem to affirm this point. It is clear that even a moderate maritime force could successfully blockade and even stop two-way trade through these vital sea-lanes of communication (SLOC'S); trade that is bound to and from not only Asia and South Asia, but also North America, the Middle East and the Mediterranean Sea.

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<sup>110</sup> Martin Douglas, "Navies of the Far East," Naval Forces: International Forum for Maritime Power No.II, 1991: 58.

To gain a full appreciation of the present strength and amount of influence wielded by the MSDF one must begin with a historical examination of the roots of the Imperial Japanese Navy and the MSDF.

## B. THE HISTORICAL EVOLUTION OF THE JAPANESE NAVY

The Japanese, it would seem, had taken to heart the advice tendered by one of their statesmen shortly after the arrival of Commodore Perry's ships. 'As we are inferior to foreigners in the mechanical arts, let us,' he urged, 'have intercourse with foreign nations and learn their drill and methods of waging war.'<sup>111</sup>

While the Japanese do indeed have a long and proud naval tradition, it is only upon its stunning success in the Sino-Japanese War (1894-95) that Japan's international status as a potential world power became truly appreciated. The motivation for the historic Anglo-Japanese Alliance of 1902 was clearly founded in part by Great Britain's desire to align itself with this emerging naval power and to maintain an influential hand in the shifting power balance in Asia vis-a-vis Russia and France,<sup>112</sup> Through this alliance and its powerful maritime presence in the Pacific, Japan thus became the first Asian power to gain a seat at the table of global powers. Japan was seen by the west as relatively trustworthy,

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<sup>111</sup> Hector C. Bywater, Sea-Power In The Pacific (Boston and New York: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1921), 134.

<sup>112</sup> Hisahiko Okazaki, A Grand Strategy For Japanese Defense (New York: University Press Of America, 1986), 46.

and more importantly, capable of maintaining order in Asia. While not yet a full fledged member of this exclusive club, Japan's arrival on the international scene had been nothing short of extraordinary.

The domestic result within Japan of this meteoric rise in Japanese global status was that the military establishment began to assume an extremely powerful place within Japanese domestic politics and became especially influential in terms of foreign policy. Mikiso Hane points out that in 1897 the Japanese military staff office was established by General Yamagata Aritomo (1838-1922). With the formation of this office, military supreme command was henceforth effectively placed beyond civilian control. A follow-on ordinance issued in 1889 expanded on these powers by allowing the military commanders to bypass even the cabinet, giving them direct access to the Emperor in matters of military importance.<sup>113</sup>

World War I proved to be another boon to Japanese naval progress. At the end of the war there existed no western nation prepared or willing to counter the Imperial Japanese Navy's dominance in the Pacific as their own post-war interests remained primarily in establishing and maintaining security within European waters and additionally, "no western Pacific regional power was in a position to contest Japanese

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<sup>113</sup> Mikiso Hane, 130.

expansion.<sup>114</sup> This allowed Japan to freely build upon both their economic and military infrastructures largely free from outside interference; indeed with the tacit approval of much of the west. In retrospect, the absence of any large scale western military presence within Asia after World War I provided the time and opportunity for the Japanese to build their soon to be impressive navy that would prove to be so powerful during World War II.

The London Disarmament Conference of 1930 expanded upon the Washington Conference's (1921-22)<sup>115</sup> naval vessel ratio of 3-5-5 to include heavy cruisers and a 10-10-7 ratio for light cruisers. Hamaguchi had been attempting in vain to forge more friendly bilateral relationships with the West (specifically the United States) and accepted these more restrictive terms in the interest of international cooperation, over the strong objections of many leading Imperial Navy and military staff officers.<sup>116</sup>

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<sup>114</sup> A.W. Grazebrook, 27.

<sup>115</sup> "The Four Power Pact," otherwise known as the "Washington Conference," was held between November 1921 and February 1922. The signatories were France, Great Britain, the United States and Japan. The "Pact" was pursued in line with the emergence of the post-WWI Wilsonian "new diplomacy" that called for limited disarmament and a system of multilateral treaties around the world. The distinct purpose of the "Four Power Pact" was to affect the naval balance of power in the Pacific so that Japan could defend itself, but not be able to wage war against the existent fleets in the region, namely the U.S. and Great Britain. Thus the ratio of Japanese ships to the U.S. and Great Britain was set at 3-5-5.

<sup>116</sup> Fairbank, Reischauer, and Craig, 701.

For several reasons, the Imperial Japanese Navy also strongly opposed the army's policy in China during the 1930's; first, due to its own desire to expand naval influence; second, its desire to secure a reliable source of sorely needed raw materials in Southeast Asia; and finally its desire to continue strengthening the navy without drawing attention from the west due to Japanese policies elsewhere in Asia. A testament to growing Japanese naval bureaucratic power within domestic politics in the years leading up to World War II was the fact that the Hirota government in fact adopted this policy upon the forceful demands from the navy.<sup>117</sup>

As the navy became stronger within the Imperial government, it fervently pushed to repeal the terms of the 1930 Disarmament Conference, and in fact the navy...

...used their power...to force Japan to withdraw from the international disarmament system by presenting a demand for complete naval parity that of course proved unacceptable to the other powers at the Second London Conference in 1935. Free from the Treaty, Japan began in 1937 a larger program of naval construction.<sup>118</sup>

In fact it was these types of global political developments and friction that clearly drove Japan to align with both Germany and Italy as the 1930's came to a close.<sup>119</sup> These alignments were not so much born out of ideological

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<sup>117</sup> Mikiso Hane, 267.

<sup>118</sup> Fairbank, Reischauer and Craig, 715.

<sup>119</sup> Fairbank, Reischauer and Craig, 715.



compatibility with either Nazism or Fascism, but rather were developed out of convenience and as a protest against western treatment of Japan as a "junior partner" in the Pacific.

The apex of Japanese naval power and influence within Japanese politics could be said to have been witnessed at Pearl Harbor (December 7, 1941). The attack was conceived by Admiral Yamamoto Isoroku (1884-1942). While seen as a great victory within Japan, in retrospect it was clearly a strategic and tactical failure. While there is some historical speculation concerning American intervention in the war without the attack on Pearl Harbor, it can be said with confidence that the attack functioned not to cripple the U.S. Pacific fleet, but rather it so enraged the nation that the defeat of Japan was practically assured in America's mind from the moment of the attack.

The American occupation of Japan after World War II slowly brought back to life those aspects of Japanese political and military structures that were deemed necessary for the maintenance of internal order and discipline and which were necessary to ensure eventual Japanese economic and political self-sufficiency. The Imperial Navy was thus reborn as the Maritime Safety Agency in May, 1948 and eventually evolved into the Maritime Self-Defense Force (MSDF). It may have been given a new name, but the spirit of the Imperial Navy was faithfully preserved.

There is no real break between the old Imperial Japanese Navy and the postwar Maritime Self-Defense Force, asserts James Auer...about the only difference between the Imperial Navy and the MSDF is that the MSDF bans drinking on board ship.<sup>120</sup>

This new naval force was developed by the United States in response to the onset of the Korean War and in fact Admiral Yamamoto was recalled to take charge of what he insisted on calling his "small navy". This force was initially charged with mine clearance of the many remaining World War II mines around the waters of Japan to make passage safe for American ships involved in the Korean conflict and to enable Japan to resume safe maritime trade with the rest of the world.<sup>121</sup>

At the completion of the Korean war came the signing of the Japanese-American Security treaty in September 1951. This treaty was soon followed by The Mutual Defense Pact of 1954 which provided for Japan to build its own self-defense force with American money and expertise. These ideas were not particularly attractive to the Japanese immediately after a protracted war and occupation, but the long-run benefits of the Mutual Defense Pact (and its various alterations) have

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<sup>120</sup> Staff of the Asahi Shimbun, The Pacific Rivals: A Japanese View of Japanese American Relations (New York and Tokyo: Weatherhill/Asahi, 1972), 196. It is interesting to note what the Asahi Shimbun points out as the ironic birth of the Self-Defense Forces themselves immediately after the outbreak of the Korean War as a result of the Japanese requirement to provide what MacArthur called a "police reserve". See page 196 for further discussion.

<sup>121</sup> Asahi Shimbun, 197.

clearly benefitted the Japanese economy and the security of its citizens.<sup>122</sup>

The 1970's witnessed more changes in the U.S.-Japanese security relationship as President Nixon called on Pacific allies to bear more of the defense burden and closed many former U.S. bases in Japan. These events coupled with expanding Soviet power in the Pacific made it painfully clear to the Japanese that an increase in defense spending was clearly required, like it or not.<sup>123</sup> Their success and speed in rebuilding a viable military infrastructure is well beyond western expectations and is only now coming to be fully appreciated.

It was only with the dawn of the 1980's that the United States truly began to witness real and genuine strides toward Pacific region burden-sharing by Japan and Korea in addition to the necessary result of such a demand: a rapidly growing Japanese military. The 1980's saw Japan assume a much greater role in providing for its own self-defense and vowed to protect not only its land but also vital sea-lanes. This so called "1000nm Sea Lane Defense" posture has partly led to defense spending being increased from 1% to 3% of GNP from

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<sup>122</sup> Gerald Segal, Rethinking The Pacific (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1990), 242.

<sup>123</sup> Gerald Segal, 244.

1988 to 1991.<sup>124</sup> These bolder attempts toward Japanese military autonomy, while largely under American auspices, has contributed to regional suspicion and anxiety over this growth in Japanese power. Lee Kuan Yew has been the most outspoken on this issue, even criticizing the United States for pressing Japan to build up its military capabilities in efforts to relieve the U.S burden in Asia.

Mr. Lee also raised the issue of Japan acquiring nuclear weapons. He said that if the Japanese were prompted to 'take the military road, they will come out on top and this time because it is a nuclear world, it will lead to the destruction of everything.'<sup>125</sup>

The rest of Asia would definitely prefer to see the United States maintain a dominant and influential presence in Japan itself. As long as the United States has troops stationed in Japan, it is perceived that the United States would maintain a "veto" over the use of force by any of Japan's armed forces. By withdrawing U.S. forces from Japan, Japan would then be free and quite possibly obliged to fend for itself militarily and in light of its historical military reputation that possibility alarms the rest of Asia.

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<sup>124</sup> Paul Beaver, ed., "JDW Country Survey: Japan," Jane's Defence Weekly 17 August 1991, 282. It is interesting that this article points out that this was the first "White Paper" in three years to mention the Soviet threat. It seems as if that threat had long been taken for granted, but with the thaw in U.S.-Russian relations, Japan probably felt compelled to explain that they still took that threat seriously.

<sup>125</sup> Michael Richardson, "Regional Mistrust Increasing," 34.

Of all Japan's Self-Defense Forces, the MSDF has arguably made the most dramatic progress in rebuilding the "Imperial Navy" from out of the ashes of World War II. It is to a closer examination of today's MSDF that we now turn.

### C. THE MSDF IN THE 1990'S

Japan's Maritime Self-Defense Force (JMSDF) is rapidly becoming a blue water navy with the capability to project naval power far into the Pacific and Indian Oceans. Even without the possibility of an aircraft carrier project this decade, the JMSDF is developing into one of the world's top six navies with new escorts and fleet replenishment ships.<sup>1-6</sup>

The modernization of the MSDF is taking place within an era of increased regional uncertainty. Throughout Asia, all countries are carefully reassessing threats and threat levels in terms of their own military readiness. Political and diplomatic arrangements are taking on a more important tone as new alliances and partnerships begin taking shape within the ideological vacuum caused by the end of the Cold War.

While some may view military expansion as inherently destabilizing, it is nonetheless seen as prudent, not only in Japan, but also in the nations throughout Asia to prepare for this uncertainty by strengthening their defensive and offensive military capabilities. These military developments have been by and large maritime in nature, in response to the

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<sup>126</sup> Paul Beaver, 278.



geographical nature of the region. Any conflict in the near future involving any East or South Asian nation would almost certainly involve territorial or sea-lane disputes.

In the eyes of Japan there are very tangible (if partially unrealistic to the west) threats emerging and/or persisting as the Cold War winds down. The 1991 Japanese Defense White Paper cited the increase in the quality if not the quantity of Soviet equipment in the Soviet Far East as a direct threat, and that despite the thaw in East-West tensions...

Japanese fighters have continued to intercept Soviet combat aircraft probing the archipelago's air defence region boundaries...there has been no decline in the number of intercepts as a result of the thaw in US/Soviet relations.<sup>127</sup>

The "New Mid-Term Defense Plan," as explicated in the "Defense of Japan 1991"<sup>128</sup> calls for an average rate of increase in military expenditures of 3% annually between 1991-1995. Of that amount, the MSDF is expected to receive approximately 24% of the total Self-Defense Force (SDF) budget, as was the case in fiscal year 1991.<sup>129</sup> During this "Mid-Term Defense Plan," the MSDF is scheduled to obtain ten new "Aegis" destroyers, 5 unidentified submarines, and various

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<sup>127</sup> Kensuke Ebata and Paul Beaver, "Moving Against the Flow: Japan's Defence Build-Up," Jane's Defence Weekly 10 August 1991, 232.

<sup>128</sup> Defense Agency, Japan, Defense of Japan 1991 trans. by Japan Times, Ltd., 90.

<sup>129</sup> Defense of Japan, 99.

other maritime craft. The total procurement for the MSDF during the five year time-frame will be 35 vessels constructed, totalling approximately 96,000 tons.<sup>130</sup>

Additionally Japan views the increased defense expenditures of both China and North Korea with a good deal of trepidation. Moreover, Japan has always viewed its widely held and extremely valuable economic interests as a matter of national security and in the emerging era of regional doubt they "would not sit idly by if political instability were to threaten their long-term access to commercial markets in Asia."<sup>131</sup>

It is within the context of this explicitly defined threat that Japan is modernizing and expanding its already impressive naval capabilities. While clearly confident that some degree of American military presence will continue well into the future, Japan is nonetheless interested in moving toward a genuine degree of military self-sufficiency while at the same time maintaining a close working relationship with the U.S. military, most specifically the U.S. Navy.

These facts are clear when examining recent Japanese military expenditures. The total JSDF budget for 1992 was \$34.30 billion, an increase of \$1.62 billion over 1991<sup>132</sup>.

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<sup>130</sup> Defense of Japan, 210.

<sup>131</sup> Gene Tracey, "Japan's 'Self-Defence' Efforts," Asian Defence Journal June 1990, 4.

<sup>132</sup> "The Military Balance 1991-92," 150.

The MSDF claimed approximately 24% of the total SDF budget, "...39.1 per cent [of the MSDF budget] being allocated to maintaining the operational effectiveness of the fleet and buying new equipment."<sup>133</sup>

An examination of the capabilities and projected equipment purchases of the MSDF shows that Japan is striving toward improving their "blue water" maritime capabilities. 1991 saw the completion of the first group of underway replenishment vessels for blue water support of fleet operations.<sup>134</sup> The Japanese surface combatant fleet is one of the youngest in the world in terms of hull life. The pride and joy of the surface fleet will be the new "Aegis" type guided missile destroyer, the lead ship in this class to be called the "Yukikaze," named after a fabled and revered World War II Japanese destroyer.<sup>135</sup>

The MSDF has developed what is called the "Eight-Eight" Flotilla program which will provide the MSDF with four escort flotillas of eight surface combatants each, all flotillas will contain one of the "Yukikaze class" destroyers.<sup>136</sup> In addition to the main line combatants of the flotillas, the MSDF is ambitiously pursuing modernization of its mine warfare

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<sup>133</sup> Paul Beaver, 278.

<sup>134</sup> Kensuke Ebata and Paul Beaver, 232.

<sup>135</sup> Paul Beaver, 278.

<sup>136</sup> Paul Beaver, 278.

and detection capabilities. Japan currently possesses six ocean going mine countermeasure (MCM) ships and eleven (MH-53E) Sea Dragon MCM helicopters.<sup>137</sup> These vessels caused domestic controversy among opponents of a rearmed Japan when they were sent to the Persian Gulf after Operation Desert Storm to assist the Allies in clearing minefields.<sup>138</sup>

Of particular note in naval aviation is Japan's rapidly expanding long-range airborne maritime patrol capability. Its 104 P-3c Orion aircraft makes Japan the third largest owner of these planes in the world behind the U.S. and Russia.<sup>139</sup> These aircraft are intended for long range reconnaissance and surveillance. They would presumably be used by Japan to warn of any imminent strike from either the north or the west and they provide an excellent example of growing Japanese autonomy and self-reliance in defensive maritime warfare.

In terms of a submarine force, Japan currently possesses 17 conventional diesel-electric submarines, 10 of which have joined the fleet just in the 1980's.<sup>140</sup> The early versions of these boats were based largely on an American design, but subsequent versions have utilized improved Japanese hull designs and superior electronics. The submarine force is seen

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<sup>137</sup> Paul Beaver, 279.

<sup>138</sup> A.W. Grazebrook, 28.

<sup>139</sup> Paul Beaver, 279.

<sup>140</sup> Martin Douglas, 58.

to provide Japan with a covert reconnaissance capability within the narrow straits around Japan, such reconnaissance has historically been aimed primarily at Russia.<sup>141</sup>

The development of a light attack helicopter carrier is seen as a possible precursor to the indigenous production of a full-fledged aircraft carrier. This vessel could be used for vertical take-off type aircraft, possibly British Harriers, and it's production has caused widespread domestic concern that this is the real first step toward an offensive naval capability.<sup>142</sup>

In addition to the actual shipbuilding and aircraft acquisition efforts, Japan continues to proceed with intensive research and development of future weapons systems. Much of the new R&D is being undertaken with the aid and approval of the U.S., occasionally leading to co-production efforts. The recent FSX fiasco is one example that went badly. The exchange of technology and information flows both ways across the Pacific as the U.S. obtained agreement with Tokyo in 1986 for their cooperation in the U.S. Strategic Defense Initiative (SDI),<sup>143</sup> in addition to many critical technologies in American weapon systems being produced by Japan (for example,

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<sup>141</sup> A.W. Grazebrook, 28.

<sup>142</sup> Martin Douglas, 59.

<sup>143</sup> Tsuneo Akaha, "Japan's Comprehensive Security Policy," Asian Survey XXXI, No. 4 (April 1991), 326.



flat screen displays) that are primarily composed of Japanese semi-conductors.

This desire to achieve self-sufficiency permeates all aspects of Japanese life and has a fundamental impact on how Japan associates with the rest of the world. Part of the explanation for this particularly Japanese characteristic lies in the absolute reliance that Japan has on a large number of critical raw materials for its very existence. The Japanese have shown that they will forego the free-market concept of comparative advantage in order to indigenously produce or grow as many goods as possible at whatever price is required. This eventually contributes to the high prices that the Japanese consumer faces in purchasing many goods. When goods cannot be produced indigenously, Japan will seek out as many friendly suppliers around the world in order to hedge their bets and maintain a reliable flow of these goods over time.

The people of Japan generally accept the inevitable personal hardship brought about through these policies in order to promote the power and self-sufficiency of the state. Clyde Prestowitz provides some cogent insight into this subtle and largely misunderstood Japanese trait:

Thus the Japanese lay great stress on self-sufficiency - and do so all the more precisely because Japan knows it cannot be self-sufficient. Most Japanese reiterate the theme that their country is a small island nation with no natural resources in order to rationalize and justify its efforts to be dependent on nothing beyond natural resources simply not available in Japan...they know the

Japanese can be relied upon, but they are unsure of foreigners.<sup>144</sup>

This trait in turn stirs feelings of apprehension on the part of other Asian countries as suspicions concerning actual Japanese motives are inevitably raised. This suspicion is in turn felt by the Japanese themselves and there exists a type of vicious circle that plays itself out at the basic subconscious level of international diplomacy and negotiations. While these feelings can be explained away in terms of western countries, it is difficult for other Asian countries to be confronted with such an attitude by a country that at a basic level they see as essentially their "brothers."

The recent military and specifically maritime expansion examined here falls directly in line with the continuation of this concept that lies at the very heart of the Japanese psyche. One criticism that can be made of Japan is remaining insensitive to the impact that its military modernization has had upon Japan's neighbors and how the United States is then forced to address these regional apprehensions and misperceptions in order to maintain its own influential stance in the region.

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<sup>144</sup> Clyde V. Prestowitz, jr., Trading Places: How We Are Giving Our Future to Japan And How To Reclaim It (New York: Basic Books, Inc., 1988), 209.

#### D. AMERICA AND ASIA EYE JAPAN

The U.S.-Japanese relationship is fundamental to the future of America's position in Asia. Given Japan's large and ever-increasing economic presence throughout the region, the United States cannot hope to exercise constructive leadership without a healthy and harmonious relationship with Japan. Few things are as unsettling to other Asians as evidence of dysfunction in U.S.-Japanese relations...<sup>145</sup>

Quite possibly one of the most difficult and sensitive issues facing the United States is how it will manage the inevitable change in its working relationship with Japan. The world and more specifically the nations of Asia are watching closely as this reassessment begins to take shape.

Japan has legitimate and genuinely felt threats. The resolution of the northern territories issue with Russia would provide an important step in this direction and the United States should take an active and enthusiastic role in ensuring that this problem is promptly solved. Japan and the United States share concern over North Korea, and the U.S. Defense Department remains extremely wary of Korean tensions boiling over into a violent regional confrontation.

The fact is, that when looking around Asia, many of Japan's concerns are indeed similar to those of the United States. The United states, if it is wise, will pursue a balanced and careful approach in the region thereby serving to

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<sup>145</sup> Stephen W. Bosworth, "The United States And Asia," Foreign Affairs 71, No. 1 (1992): 113.

meet the concerns not only of Japan, but also of America's friends and allies around the rest of Asia.

The issue of burden sharing by the Japanese is currently being argued, but it is clear that Japan's share of the costs of stationing U.S. troops on Japanese soil has been steadily increasing as demands from the United States have slowly brought this issue to the fore. As mentioned earlier, the nations around Asia prefer to see the United States remain actively involved not only throughout the waters of Asia but specifically stationed in Japan to provide a type of leash on any Japanese military actions.

The United States must be careful in its pursuit of the burden sharing issue. As can be seen from the thrust of this thesis, Japan is more than capable of arming itself if it becomes necessary. While it would clearly prefer to let the United States take the lead in Japanese defense, it would be a mistake to think that they would maintain this position regardless of U.S. pressures on their continuing efforts to meet U.S. stationing costs:

Shunji Taoka, staff writer for 'Business Tokyo', noted in the March 1990 issue... 'Are we getting a free ride? Japan will spend US\$2.5 billion this fiscal year for the US forces stationed here. That is more than the Science and Technology Agency's (Tokyo) budget of US\$2.5 billion. It works out to US\$51,710 for each of the 49,700 American men and women assigned here... We contribute more than 40 per cent of the total price tag for US forces. If Japan were to knuckle under to Senate demands, it would cost the

taxpayers almost as much as the US\$6.83 billion we spend on our own navy.<sup>140</sup>

Japan is playing all sides of the game in the age old effort to cover all its bets. In the final analysis Japan feels itself alone in the world. It has been said that before the birth of the U.S. relationship after World War II, that Japan never really had an ally. It could be said that they still do not have one. The very nature of Japanese society and politics would sometimes seem to preclude mutual trust and breed suspicion.

The current military buildup and most specifically the rapid growth in Japanese naval power would seem to affirm the fact that Japan is preparing for an era where possibly they become possibly dispossessed of their long-time protector and find that they have to fend for themselves in the Pacific Century.

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<sup>140</sup> Gene D Tracey, 14. Japan now pays for over 50% of the stationing costs for U.S. troops, but it would be foolish to think that this number has no ceiling and that ceiling is not rapidly being approached.



## V. ASEAN NAVIES IN THE POST-COLD WAR ERA

### A. OVERVIEW OF PREVAILING CONCERNS

...with the end of the Cold War, the disintegration of the Soviet Union, the phased reductions of U.S. forces in the Asia-Pacific area, and improved relations with Indo-China and China, ASEAN feels the time has come to deal with regional security problems in a more active way....and...(has) recognized that economic growth in the region could not be maintained without stability and security.<sup>147</sup>

The nations that compose the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN)<sup>148</sup> are faced with the similar dilemma confronting other peripheral players in the Cold War as U.S.-Russian tensions have receded, namely: what is the emerging international order and power structure going to look like, and who will be the dominant players affecting that structure, and where will these peripheral players fit in?

The extensive speculation of the impending "Pacific Century" is a genuine concern for these smaller Asian nations. These countries fully realize that in the future not only will economic power be important, but absent the East-West struggle, the strength of a nations military will need to be

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<sup>147</sup> Michael Richardson, "ASEAN Opts for Closer Security Ties," Asia-Pacific Defence Reporter (April-May 1992): 32.

<sup>148</sup> ASEAN was founded in 1967 and is composed of the following nations: Brunei, Indonesia, Malaysia, The Philippines, Singapore, and Thailand.

commensurate with the amount and scope of the economic interests individual nations will need to defend.

While it may be true that the degree of economic influence a nation wields may supplant military prowess as the central factor holding sway in the course of international affairs, it is still the case that any nation which is strong economically but unable to adequately preserve and defend those interests will not be taken as seriously as a nation which has a more prudent balance of economic and military strength.

Thoughts of a Pacific Century are generally centered upon Japan, Korea and China, nations which are not only developing strong economic and military structures, but also possess the intangible but important element of political will, enabling them to pursue an active role in the future of regional power politics. If this prediction becomes a reality, then the smaller nations under question may quickly be confronted with tremendous economic, military and political challenges. As a group of ethnically diverse and politically disparate nations, the issue of forming a consensus and building a functional military and/or economic coalition may prove to be the true test of survival for ASEAN as a viable organization.

The United States has a long Cold War heritage of active engagement throughout the regions of South and Southeast Asia, essentially posed as a counter-force to what was up until now a mighty Soviet naval presence. The presence of both super-powers led to a regional stability and status quo that has

come to be the accepted norm by the observers and benefactors of this stand-off.

ASEAN has prospered under the U.S. security umbrella, which one Southeast Asian official describes as 'benign in intent and stabilizing in influence'. Although the U.S. appears set to maintain a military presence in the region, it will be on a substantially reduced scale. This has raised concerns among some ASEAN leaders that a power vacuum will be created...with unpredictable results.<sup>149</sup>

With thoughts of a declining Soviet fleet and a voluntary, if partial, withdrawal of U.S. naval forces from Asia, all nations in this area are being forced to reassess their individual security needs and reevaluate their own standing in a region possibly dispossessed of an intervening and protective military/maritime force. This issue is articulated by Michael Richardson when he notes that the recent ASEAN summit stressed the employment of military and security cooperation as means of addressing regional as well as intra-associational difficulties in efforts "...to avoid military misunderstandings and a flare-up of territorial disputes...."<sup>150</sup> ,,

By the same token, it is clear that there is more at work than an uncertainty as to the future power structure of the region. There lies at the base of this regional coalition a

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<sup>149</sup> Robert Karniol, "Regional Self-reliance in ASEAN," International Defense Review (February 1991): 126.

<sup>150</sup> Michael Richardson, "ASEAN Opts for Closer Security Ties," 32.

shared sense of apprehension concerning the other partners' aspirations on a regional and global scale. Until now those apprehensions were largely unspoken since any individual attempts to expand politically or militarily would probably have been met with international disapproval and possible censure by its heretofore protective allies.

Additionally, until recently, these nations' respective economic situations, by and large, might have proved too delicately balanced to withstand this type of international disagreement or to weather the storm of full fledged regional conflict. This concern is very much on the minds of all the ASEAN leaders as they currently strive to intervene and assist in resolving disputes not only between ASEAN members, but also other Asian neighbors with interests and disputes within the territory covered in part by ASEAN (Spratly Islands and Cambodia are two examples).

At the recent NAM summit in Jakarta, the ASEAN leaders were careful to point out that ASEAN was not and should not become a "military alliance."<sup>151</sup> Intervention in terms of diplomatic and negotiation assistance was offered, however, as a means to possibly settling regional disturbances such as the Spratly Islands dispute.

Admiral Soedibyo [Chief of the General Staff of the Indonesian Armed Forces] said China, Russia, Vietnam and Laos could also be brought into the regional security

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<sup>151</sup> Michael Richardson, 34.

dialogue by attending meetings that take place immediately after the annual conference of ASEAN foreign ministers....The Spratly dispute, he added, may be one problem that could be addressed in this forum in the future.<sup>152</sup>

The mutual cooperation and economic success enjoyed by these countries is praiseworthy; however, it is important to remember that the cultural, religious, and political differences that clearly set these nations apart have been a deep seated and integral part of their respective societies for considerably longer than this grouping has been in place. Indeed the economic affluence that has been achieved by some (by no means all) of the nations of ASEAN has come about as a result of individual national initiatives and cannot be credited to any kind of shared objective or unified approach by ASEAN itself. It is within the current international situation that the many and varied cultural differences and varied perceptions of national interest that set these nations apart may come to have a direct impact upon the shifting regional power structure.

Nonetheless, the immediately acute and explicitly identified concern of these countries is the potential rise of regional super-powers, namely: Japan, China, and India.<sup>153</sup> The Cold War status quo was seen by the countries of ASEAN as providing a restraint upon these Asian giants. Forever wary

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<sup>152</sup> Michael Richardson, 34.

<sup>153</sup> Michael Richardson, 124.



of outside attack and annexation, the nations of ASEAN are clearly concerned that the end of the Cold War will find them helpless against these mighty neighbors. The manifestation of these rising fears is the seemingly gradual buildup of military forces being undertaken by these nations. These new forces are largely maritime, or at least designed for maritime conflict. With the continental threat apparently diminished, these countries are rapidly transferring their military efforts toward fortifying their individual maritime defensive and offensive capabilities.

This chapter will attempt to examine the ascension of the ASEAN countries both economically and militarily, with the exception of Brunei<sup>154</sup>. This chapter concentrates on intra-ASEAN relationships in addition to ASEAN's transforming regional security position. Toward this end, it explores the build up of arms that the individual countries within ASEAN have undertaken, specifically, the maritime forces.

With the impending changes to basic international security arrangements, it would seem clear that a fresh assessment of the possible roles that ASEAN may assume or fail to assume in defining those arrangements would be appropriate.

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<sup>154</sup> Brunei, while an extremely wealthy nation, has a very small military force, and neither desires nor wields much political clout within the region.

## **B. ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND REGIONAL FRICTION**

ASEAN was founded in 1967 as an association dedicated to the economic development and political security of its member nations. With the full support of the United States, it has evolved into a strong and reliable ally within Southeast Asia for the United States in what was the Cold War maritime stand-off with the Soviet Union. A corollary development of this superpower presence is one enjoyed by all of Asia, namely: an environment of relatively stable regional security, allowing these less developed nations to concentrate on domestic economic development while not having to be overly concerned with military growth.

The United States has been an enthusiastic supporter of ASEAN since its inception. The superb economic growth that has been witnessed in some of these nations has drawn accolades around the world as a model for economic development. It would seem clear that with the end of the Cold War that had accompanied this relative economic prosperity, a necessarily protective and cautious approach to expanding their regional power base will be attempted by the nations of ASEAN, combined with a dynamic pursuit of strengthened diplomatic ties with western nations whose interests fall in line with those of the individual member states.

The economic achievements realized by these nations in a relatively short time is quite impressive indeed. It is

largely the existence of an environment of relatively stable security throughout this region that has allowed these nations to be able to pursue their goal of economic prosperity. That security in turn has undoubtedly been reliably preserved by the continual presence of the U.S. military, specifically, the U.S. Navy. The U.S. Navy was on station to ensure that the vital SLOC's in the region remained open and that any minor conflict remained localized so as not to result in horizontal escalation within the Cold War context.

The continuing interest and desire on the part of the United States to remain actively engaged as a vigorous trading partner with the nations of ASEAN while continuing to maintain a security presence in the region can be observed in the following statement by former Secretary of State James Baker:

ASEAN today is America's fifth largest trading partner, rivaling U.S. commerce with Germany; and America is ASEAN's largest export market. ASEAN was a leader in launching the Uruguay Round of the GATT, and we look to ASEAN for support in successfully completing the current negotiations. We have worked hard to keep ASEAN at the core of our efforts at regional economic integration, and we will continue to do so....The base-access agreement reached earlier this year with Singapore is a reflection of our commitment to sustaining a defense capability in Southeast Asia- as well as of the region's widespread desire for an active U.S. security presence.<sup>155</sup>

The resounding economic growth witnessed in this region has resulted in concentrated efforts by some western countries

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<sup>155</sup> James A. Baker III, "America in Asia: Emerging Architecture For A Pacific Community," Foreign Affairs, 70, No. 5 (Winter 1991/92): 13-14.

to ensure that these recently burgeoning economies remain open and friendly to the west, and in turn these western nations have begun to actively pursue the formation of organized economic alliances designed to strengthen their own economic interests within this region. This ironic development is seen by the nations of ASEAN as an unprecedented opportunity to forge concrete and tangible alliances on an equal partnership basis with nations whose interests mesh at least reasonably with their own.

The formation of the Asian-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC), while initially causing some consternation on the part of the core nations of ASEAN, is now seen to be a successful result of this surge of international interest in ASEAN. APEC was originally proposed in 1979 and has since gained momentum, culminating in its official organization in November 1991. APEC consists of the ASEAN states plus the U.S., Australia, Japan, Canada, South Korea, New Zealand, China, and Hong Kong. This organization is dedicated to opening up world markets and is strongly opposed to other economic groupings (EC, NAFTA) forming regional trading blocs which may foster isolation and an inward looking attitude. APEC's future is seen to be dependent on the ongoing Uruguay Round of GATT negotiations, which will hopefully decide the critical matter of endorsing

regional trading blocs vice the concept of a global economy.<sup>156</sup>

The nations of ASEAN were originally apprehensive of APEC, concerned that their own regional interests would be overshadowed by the injection of global interests by the other larger members of the Cooperation. They insisted that leadership in APEC be retained by a nation within ASEAN, and this condition has been agreed upon.<sup>157</sup> ASEAN, led by Malaysia, had earlier been attempting to form an "East Asia only" economic grouping (the "East Asia Economic Caucus") that would exclude the U.S., Australia and Canada. This attempt was predictably opposed by these countries as fostering just the type of regionalism that APEC (and GATT) was trying to avoid. This move has effectively been stalled upon the sanctioning of APEC.

These events point to the powerful place in the international structure that the ASEAN nations are beginning to assume. As an example, in reference to the "Asia only" proposal, former Secretary of State Baker was quick to assert that "America's future lies across the Pacific", and U.S. officials were careful to affirm their commitment that ASEAN

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<sup>156</sup> Clayton Jones, "Asia-Pacific Group Calls For Open Trade," The Christian Science Monitor, 15 November 1991.

<sup>157</sup> Research Institute For Peace and Security, Asian Security 1990-91 (London, Oxford: Brassey's (UK), 1990), 156-57



remain the "core of APEC."<sup>158</sup> Asian, as well as ASEAN fears of NAFTA and the EC evolving into exclusive trading blocks poses a challenge to the U.S. American leaders must be careful to reassure Asia that the U.S. does not desire to exclude any nation, but rather it advocates the inclusion of all free-market oriented societies into the world economy.

Within this sphere of international relations and economic affairs the nations of ASEAN present a generally united and cooperative voice. While this appearance is not necessarily a facade, there are some aspects of intra-ASEAN conflict that need to be understood to attain a full understanding of the complex regional relationships that directly effect the regional power structure and the independent policies pursued by individual nations within the Association. It is within the context of these complex and often contentious relationships that growing worldwide concern over the recent display of military growth can be observed.

At the ASEAN core- the Indonesian, Singapore, Malaysian triangle- irritants abound. It is here especially where Chinese race and ethnicity directly interfaces with Malay and Indonesian, that cultural discord reinforces highly visible economic differentiation.<sup>159</sup>

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<sup>158</sup> Clayton Jones, 2.

<sup>159</sup> Dr. Donald Weatherbee, "Changing Parameters for ASEAN Security in the 1990's," in Dora Alves, ed. Change, Interdependence and Security in the Pacific Basin. The 1990 Pacific Symposium (Washington D.C.: National University Press, 1991), 288.

At the heart of ASEAN's regional anxieties is the cultural mixture and ethnic combinations that were alluded to in the above quotation. The nations of ASEAN arose from a common Indic (Hindu) cultural heritage with the exception of Singapore, who, alone in the group, arose within the otherwise pervasive Chinese cultural influence that dominated mainland Southeast Asia up until the 20th century. This fact, in and of itself, sets Singapore apart from her partners in the association. Combine the fact that Singapore is extremely small geographically, and rather powerful economically, and the formula adds up to potential conflict. Additionally, the 20th century has witnessed the emergence of a myriad of racial and cultural mixtures being assimilated into these already complex societies. These tensions have manifested themselves in various but not always overtly contentious ways.

The territorial waters of the South China Sea have long been an area under dispute. Many nations in the area have staked claims in and around this strategically important maritime zone. Rich in mineral, natural gas and petroleum deposits, it also borders the easiest and safest worldwide maritime passage into the Indian Ocean and points west. Most recently China has begun to aggressively pursue its claims to the Spratly Islands and various areas of the Gulf of Tonkin. Both the Philippines and Malaysia claim territorial rights to

these waters, with Thailand and Indonesia making overlapping claims to areas held by some or all of these players.<sup>160</sup>

The ability of ASEAN to peacefully and successfully reach a settlement on this issue will be a true test of regional commitment and dedication to future growth. The development of an ASEAN Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) would undoubtedly help to resolve such territorial conflicts within ASEAN, but this issue has not been actively pursued and of course do not address the Chinese issue.

Within these nations there is a growing tide of nationalism and economic differentiation that is beginning to manifest itself in calls for increased pluralism. All of these nations, as older authoritarian, market-oriented societies, may be moving closer to parliamentary democracies of some variation. While these feelings of nationalism have undoubtedly been present for some time, it is only with the easing of Cold War tensions that these feelings are being overtly expressed. The sense is that there is no single dominant regional power, any longer and that this diffusion of power clearly necessitates the emergence of one or more nations as the dominant force. The only question to be answered is who will assume that role. Again, it will only be through careful negotiation within the ASEAN framework that a mutual appreciation and understanding among these nations will

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<sup>160</sup> Young Whan Kihl, 601.

be reached. Whether ASEAN is capable or willing to act on these issues is a problematic issue at best.

The diplomatic and political alliances that individual ASEAN nations pursue unilaterally is an additional cause for intra-associational misunderstanding. Objections to such extra-ASEAN alliances are largely cloaked in the ambiguous label of "non-alignment", and many nations address any overt or full fledged cooperation with "aligned" countries as detrimental to ASEAN's greater aims. For example, Malaysia was initially apprehensive about Singapore allowing the U.S. to increase its naval presence at Singapore and subsequently agreeing to allow U.S. ships docking and indeed full scale services at their ports.<sup>161</sup>

While this type of objection is ostensibly raised in the interest of maintaining regional security and mutual trust, it in fact points clearly to the larger theme of this thesis. The nations of ASEAN are slowly becoming involved in a battle for regional dominance and prestige, with the formation of legitimate international alliances, outside of the context of ASEAN, seen to be a critical feature in strengthening that position.

This associational and regional competition is beginning to manifest itself in the form of the regional arms race examined throughout this thesis. The wide variety of complex

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<sup>161</sup> Sheldon W. Simon, "United States Security Policy and ASEAN," Current History, 89, No.545 (March 1990): 100

relationships in terms of overlapping disputes, ill-defined alliances of convenience and long standing ethnic disputes serves to generate the impetus for this buildup and is only aggravated by what is seen as ambiguity concerning the future role of the U.S. military in what has been a traditional function of regional balancer. In the unique case of ASEAN, military arms have largely been provided by western nations (primarily the United States) who have long held interests in this region, leading to an additional regional concern as to the future of ASEAN's heretofore concessional arms deals.

It is to an examination of the naval capabilities and current naval buildup within ASEAN to which we now turn.

### **C. THE GROWTH OF ASEAN MILITARIES**

...there has been what amounts to a slow motion arms race...involving most of the ASEAN states over the last two decades, motivated to a notable degree by 'non-threat factors'- especially military and national prestige and status- but also 'supplier pressures' from the defense industries of the U.S. and Europe.<sup>162</sup>

ASEAN has never been, nor was it intended to be, a military alliance. Over the years there have been limited attempts at forging associational security arrangements resulting in varying degrees of success. Malaysia initiated the concept of a Zone of Peace, Freedom and Neutrality (ZOPFAN) in 1971, in an effort to establish a "nuclear-free

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<sup>162</sup> Tim Huxley, 70.



zone" within Southeast Asia.<sup>163</sup> This effort has been seen as another attempt at the reaffirmation of "non-alignment" but has never been taken seriously by the majority of ASEAN nations, and the western powers have shown little desire for this type of contingency. The problem facing the nations of ASEAN today is that their rationale for "non-alignment," similar to India, has quite possibly been overcome by events, i.e., the end of the global struggle between democracy and communism.

The individual nations of ASEAN are independently pursuing the development of their own militaries completely independent of the structure of ASEAN, which in fact has no real authority to control military growth within ASEAN, and indeed whose very mission is quite obviously in a process of redefinition. It is this degree of uncertainty over the future role and effectiveness of ASEAN that in part is leading to regional apprehension which in turn acts as another factor serving to fuel the "mini arms race."

...the fact is that there is no evidence of any cooperation in arms purchasing by the ASEAN governments, despite the clear cost-saving benefits that European NATO members have secured in this way.<sup>164</sup>

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<sup>163</sup> Richard Tanter, Nuclear-Free Zones as a Demilitarization Strategy, in "Asia: Militarization And Regional Conflict," ed. Yoshikazu Sakamoto (London and New Jersey: Zed Books Ltd.), 198-99.

<sup>164</sup> Tim Huxley, 70.

While these individual nations reassess their respective regional security positions, so do the arms suppliers of the west. Within the rapidly changing global structure, only economic capability and the willingness of supplier countries to ship arms to the ASEAN states will stand in the way of military growth. While the ongoing communist and ethnic insurgencies in the Philippines, Cambodia and Burma as well as other low visibility regional conflicts may give these nations some leverage in requesting western assistance, these reasons are clearly not so compelling as the Soviet counter-balance rationale that was used for so many years. In fact, concerning the present arms buildup within ASEAN, it looks as though its every man for himself, with each country pursuing its own goals determined largely by the ability/willingness to pay and the perceived regional threats.

There is a common historical factor, however, present in the purchasing characteristics of ASEAN arms imports. A large proportion of arms in each of these countries have been imported from the United States. The United States has been actively exporting arms to some or all of these nations throughout the Cold War and it is clear that some of these nations rely heavily upon U.S. arms for the viability of their armed forces (see Table 1).

While the Clinton administration may make attempts at cutting back on large scale U.S. arms sales around the world, there is currently no reason to think that the trend of arms

sales from the west to paying customers will not continue. The difference in this region in the future will lie in the fact that the split between the economic "haves" and "have-nots" will begin to clearly manifest itself in terms of modern military capabilities, giving the economically advanced countries a distinct advantage over the less well off nations who now possess little or no leverage in attracting concessional arms sales guarantees. With the perception of waning U.S. interests in the region, this situation points to a future of regional instability leading to low-intensity conflict, almost certainly maritime in nature.

TABLE 1

## U.S. ARMS TRANSFERS TO S.E. ASIA

<u>CUMULATIVE ARMS IMPORTS</u>		<u>% OF TOTAL</u>
<u>FROM U.S. 1984-88</u>		<u>ARMS IMPORTED</u>
(MILLION 1989 \$U.S.)		
<u>INDONESIA</u>	210	29%
<u>MALAYSIA</u>	280	27%
<u>PHILIPPINES</u>	190	86%
<u>SINGAPORE</u>	900	79%
<u>THAILAND</u>	1000	67%

Source: U.S. Arms Control Agency. World Military Expenditures And Arms Transfers 1989. Washington D.C.: GPO, 1990.

Table 2 examines the naval capabilities of the individual ASEAN nations in terms of major maritime assets. The trend in the region has been to acquire arms, maritime or otherwise, that would aid in fighting some type of, as yet undefined, maritime conflict.

Table 2 points out some intriguing aspects of the various navies and their individual capabilities. Indonesia is clearly the superior navy in terms of absolute volume, and it is the only navy within ASEAN that possesses a submarine capability. The Malaysians have been trying to negotiate a agreement for the purpose of developing their own submarine project, but have been apprehensive about purchasing commercially fitted Porpoise-class submarines from the British, desiring to follow their own domestic development program.<sup>165</sup>

The Indonesians are also said to be interested in purchasing additional submarines to complement the two in service, but those have been held up for funding considerations. In terms of power projection, it has recently been reported that Indonesia is in the process of refitting the former British underway replenishment (unrep) oiler "Green Rover." While primarily an unrep vessel, it will also be

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<sup>165</sup> J.V.P. Goldrick, "The Century of the Pacific," Nava Institute Proceedings (March 1991): 64.



TABLE 2

THE ASEAN NAVIES (1992)\*

	<u>SUBS</u>	<u>FRIGATES</u>	<u>PATROL</u>	<u>MINE WARFARE**</u>	<u>AMPHIBS</u>
SINGAPORE	0	0	32	2	5
INDONESIA	2	17	43	2	14
MALAYSIA	0	4	37	5	2
THAILAND	0	6	53	7	8
PHILIPPINES	0	1	37	0	7

\* Does not include recent acquisitions by RMN of 2 frigates being built in the U.K. and the transfer of 35 "Parchim" class corvettes from Germany to Indonesia.

\*\* Includes mine-countermeasure (MCM) and mine-laying vessels.

Source: "The Military Balance of Power 1991-92," Published by the International Institute for Strategic Studies, Director, Francois Heisborg, London. October 1991.

capable of operating but not embarking helicopters of "Super Puma" size.<sup>166</sup>

The Singaporean Navy, while not as numerically impressive as Indonesia, has the newest navy and because of that the most effective and technically advanced force. Complementing Singapore's modern maritime forces are the most technologically advanced shipbuilding facilities among the ASEAN nations and indeed all of Asia. Singapore has in fact built and exported ships for the other nations of ASEAN as well as her own navy.

Singapore is the centre of the ASEAN naval shipbuilding industry, Singapore yards have supplied most recent new construction for the Singapore navy...The current pattern is for the lead-ship in the class to be built outside Singapore with subsequent hulls built under license...Much of the Singapore navy is new, with the result that current construction plans are limited.<sup>167</sup>

Close cooperation with Israel has led to the purchase of the hull design for Singapore's newest Corvettes (fast-attack patrol boat), which possess a good deal of Israeli technology, specifically electronic equipment. Singapore currently owns 6 of these "Victory-class" corvettes. These fast-attack boats possess 8 harpoon surface-to-surface missiles (SSM's), and when combined with Singapore's current inventory of 6 French

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<sup>166</sup> Asia-Pacific Defence Reporter (June-July 1992): 25

<sup>167</sup> Stuart Slade, "Naval Construction In The ASEAN Area," Naval Forces International Forum For Maritime Power XII, No.VI (1991): 22.

Sea wolf-class fast-attack boats each with 2 Harpoon and 2 Gabriel missile systems, their coastal patrol capability is quite advanced.<sup>168</sup> Additionally, Singapore's newest maritime enterprise has led to negotiations with the Swedish in efforts to acquire four new "Landsort" minesweepers.<sup>169</sup>

The Royal Malaysian Navy (RMN) is a fairly well balanced and capable force centering on their 2 modern German-built light frigates of the Kasturi class (helo-deck and 2 Exocet SSM's). They also possess an impressive patrol-craft capability with 8 "Exocet" armed missile craft and 29 offshore patrol craft.<sup>170</sup>

In terms of modernization, Malaysia has recently come to terms with GEC-Marconi UK for the purchase of two frigates, originally planned as fast-attack boats, but upgraded to frigate size for strategic purposes. These vessels, when delivered within four years, will significantly upgrade the blue-water capability of the RMN. They will carry "Exocet" surface-to -surface missiles, electronic warfare and antisubmarine warfare systems, as well as Vertical Launch Seawolf anti-missile system. They will also be capable of embarking and operating advanced helicopters.<sup>171</sup>

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<sup>168</sup> "The Military Balance 1991-92," 153.

<sup>169</sup> Stuart Slade, 21-22.

<sup>170</sup> "The Military Balance 1991-92," 149.

<sup>171</sup> Asia-Pacific Defence Reporter (June-July 1992): 31.

The Royal Thai Navy has been the last to enter the arena of regional naval development. Current plans call for modern frigates to be supplied by the Chinese to complement or replace the 6 already in operation<sup>172</sup>. Interestingly, the Thai government is working hard at improving its amphibious capability by pursuing the upgrading of their already impressive amphibious potential to include the expansion to the divisional manning level.<sup>173</sup>

Thailand currently possesses 6 U.S. built LST's capable of holding 200 troops and 16 tanks and two 300 troop former French LST's in addition to a number of smaller amphibious craft.<sup>174</sup> In addition to these acquisitions, the RTN is said to be acquiring a 13,000 ton ramped deck, vertical take-off (VSTOL) aircraft carrier. The vessel will be capable of embarking 12 Harrier "jump jets" or "Sea King" size helicopters. Most importantly in terms of power projection capabilities, the carrier will have a 12 knot range of 10,000 nautical miles.<sup>175</sup>

The Philippines have by far the most outdated and ineffective maritime force. Their frigates are third hand, passed down from the United States through the South

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<sup>172</sup> "The Military Balance 1991-92," 154.

<sup>173</sup> Stuart Slade, 22.

<sup>174</sup> "The Military Balance," 154.

<sup>175</sup> Asia-Pacific Defence Reporter (August-September 1992): 22.

Vietnamese. Additionally, their training is inadequate and limited financial capital has led to cutbacks where improvements should have been made. Current plans for upgrading the Philippine maritime force is centered around the acquisition of improved fast-attack patrol boats. The completion of these plans is seen as "highly questionable" and in fact the navy is seen as "...utterly inadequate to match the demands placed upon it.<sup>176</sup>"

It is clear that the nations within ASEAN, with the notable exception of the Philippines, are proceeding on a generally multi-lateral maritime renovation. Additionally, they all seem to be forming their maritime forces around a perceived threat and improving their capabilities to meet that threat. Arriving at a clear definition of this threat will remain a difficult task for the countries of ASEAN.

The fact remains, however, that the countries of ASEAN are preparing for an era of perceived increased regional tension. In line with the observable trend in arms purchases and maritime construction, the perceived threat would seem to be primarily maritime in nature. The prevalence of fast-attack coastal patrol craft combined with upgraded amphibious capabilities indicates the importance of protecting the various islands that make up much of the territory in question as well as protection of long stretches of vulnerable

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<sup>176</sup> Stuart Slade, 20.



coastline from covert incursion as strategic goals upon which maritime and military doctrine is being formulated.

In addition to the adjacent sea-lanes, the nations within ASEAN have to protect various offshore mineral and oil reserves, as well as abundant fisheries. The prevention of coastal piracy and narcotics trafficking is beginning to loom as an added responsibility of the new maritime forces.

The importance of the geographical size and strategically vital location of the nations of ASEAN can not be overstated. China and India are both clearly shifting their maritime focus toward the area occupied by ASEAN. The critical SLOC's of the region function as the crossroads for two-way trade around the globe. With the possibility of a diminished American presence in Asia, and with Chinese and Indian naval expansion toward Southeast Asia, it is no wonder that the nations of ASEAN are concerned for their own security. The addition of a militarily resurgent Japan (which already has a commanding economic presence in Southeast Asia) into the already volatile equation, would serve to elevate regional anxiety.

The security reassessment in ASEAN is, and will continue to take place concurrently with the build-up of arms; a policy that is seen as prudent in light of the impending regional uncertainty.

## VI. THE AMERICAN PRESENCE CONTEMPLATED

### A. U.S. PRESENCE IN ASIA: FROM COLD WAR TO PEACE DIVIDEND

Someone - an American - has been lying for almost 50 years on a procrustean bed, with a big gun under his pillow and eyes trained on the window, through which a Soviet intruder might burst in. Today, as he is getting up from that bed, he discovers a Soviet in the room, but with an olive branch; he also notices that there are many other people all around him, that his gun is of little use in the crowd, and that the furniture has been rearranged. A bit dizzy, he congratulates himself on apparently having deterred any break-in, but he finds it difficult to make sense of the changes and the bustle, and he experiences some painful bedsores.<sup>177</sup>

This graphic and rather humorous portrayal of the United States in the post-Cold War era is actually quite concise in its assessment of the murky perspective for future U.S. foreign policy as well as that of many nations around the world. As the sole remaining superpower, the United States is holding a double-edged sword of both power and responsibility.

This chapter examines the U.S. military presence in Asia and assesses the development of American regional interests as they have evolved throughout the duration of the Cold War. It argues that a new rationale has emerged for the maintenance of a future presence in this region as the veil of East-West

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<sup>177</sup> Stanley Hoffman, "A New World Order and Its Troubles," in Nicholas Rizopoulos, ed. "Sea Changes: American Foreign Policy in a World Transformed," (New York: Council on Foreign Relations Press, 1990), 274.

conflict has been removed from the context of relations in the region. The chapter concludes with a careful examination of the scope of engagement this continued presence might and should assume.

The complexity and global ramifications of U.S.-Soviet competition as it effected the sum of international relations in the past forty-five years is reflected in the early words of George Kennan, written in his famous "Mr. X" article in July of 1947:

The issue of Soviet-American relations is in essence a test of the overall worth of the United States as a nation among nations. To avoid destruction, the United States need only measure up to its own best traditions and prove itself worthy of preservation as a great nation.<sup>173</sup>

What is clear above all else from this quotation is the genuine sense of urgency and purpose that the United States felt in contending with and containing the spread of Communism. The United States was clearly then, as now, the only nation both willing and capable of leading and meeting that challenge. This confrontation called for economic/military strength and resiliency as well as the political will and public resolve to meet the inherent demands of sacrifice. As important, there were many nations around the world who quite clearly looked to the United States to

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<sup>173</sup> "X," "The Sources of Soviet Conduct," Foreign Affairs, 25, No. 4 (July 1947): 582.

assume this mantel of responsibility and to protect them from what they saw as the scourge of Communism.

Of course, in successfully avoiding a major, possibly apocalyptic confrontation with the Soviet Union, the United States put itself in the paradoxical situation where it now has to periodically justify in hindsight its efforts at avoiding that confrontation. There will always be those who will say that the very preparation for conflict, most notably the nuclear arms race, only perpetuated the struggle and that the Cold War would not have been waged as long and as bitterly had the U.S. been more willing to accommodate the Soviet Union.

While resolution of that argument is best left to others, the victory of the United States in that struggle is as unequivocal as the obscure international power structure that has evolved in the aftermath of the Cold War. The noticeable worldwide tension concerning the manifestation of a "new world order" would seem to demand that American leaders promptly revisit the foundations and operational principles of U.S. "Grand Strategy."

Charles William Maynes conducts an scholarly examination of this issue in his Foreign Affairs article "America without the Cold War."<sup>179</sup> He posits that the coming debate concerning

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<sup>179</sup> Charles William Maynes, "America Without the Cold War," Foreign Policy, (Summer 1990).

American foreign policy will intimately involve the American public as no such matters ever have.

The choices for America are, he feels, rather clear. The United States can take advantage of its status as world superpower and continue to wield international influence at some gain and considerable cost, or it can retrench into a quasi-isolationist mode in which national interests are closely held and strictly defined. While the choices may seem clear cut, the probable long term results of either course of action are what lies at the heart of the current debate within American leadership circles.

A foreign policy based on a desire to export democracy might enhance American power in the short run, but it could lead to acting with arrogance abroad that might be dangerous in the long run. A foreign policy based on a global partnership could bring cooperative efforts in the best interests of the American people, but it would come at a cost. The two patterns of diplomacy Americans have known are isolationism and preeminence. Either maximizes America's ability to decide its fate alone. Will Americans be comfortable with an approach that requires them to allow others a voice in America's future?<sup>180</sup>

The indeterminate period during which the shape of that strategy is being defined is quite likely to be the most precarious and uneasy phase of the early post-Cold War era. As the world's dominant actor in terms of overall economic, military, and political influence, the nations of the world will most certainly be watching as the United States strives

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<sup>180</sup> Charles William Maynes, 25.



to clarify and redefine its foreign policy goals and interests. They will then likely gauge their own reactions to global developments at least in part upon the reactions of the United States, regardless of whether they are in agreement or disagreement with U.S. policies.

In sum, future U.S. actions concerning foreign policy will take on a new meaning. No longer will the military and security rationale be the primary mover and factor in determining those policies, rather it will be a varying mix of economic and security considerations that will drive foreign policy. That fact taken in conjunction with the growing U.S. dependence on the world economic marketplace, would seem to render Maynes' query moot.

Other parts of the world already have an influence over U.S. foreign policy; that is indeed the very nature of the "new world order." The U.S., as the sole remaining super power, will serve as the weather vane for the rest of the world. Therefore it is critical that U.S. foreign policy be not only carefully reassessed, but it must also be clearly defined so that there is little ambiguity concerning where U.S. national interests lie. It will be important for the other nations of the world to understand from what context the United States will base any military or economic actions in the future: namely, the economic well being of the United States and its citizens will become the standard by which any future foreign policy decisions are based.

Within the American domestic context, the end of the Cold War finds U.S. leadership facing increased pressure to reduce its Cold War defense spending and redirect those funds to more immediate and tangible internal difficulties. The so called "peace dividend," taken in light of the fact that there is no easily discernible threat to the United States, combined with the recently narrowing perceptions of national interest on the part of many legislators, has become a powerful arguing point among the American public.

To many Americans facing economic hardship, Pat Buchanan gives voice to an attractive thesis when he says,

Americans need to start asking basic questions before barging into other people's neighborhoods, and involving ourselves in other people's quarrels. First among them: Why is this our problem?<sup>181</sup>

While there is an attractive simplicity involved, there are some undeniable factors working against this kind of narrow and decidedly short term thinking. Particularly, the degree to which the world's economy has become interlocked to such an extent that national interests in the coming century will transcend the obvious and visible military and territorial concerns usually regarded as forming the essence of national security.

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<sup>181</sup> Patrick J. Buchanan, "A Chance to Put America First, at Last," Washington Post National Weekly Edition, September 16-22, 1991, 23.

Charles Krauthammer takes a soberingly realistic approach to this issue when he asserted that the United States is presently positioned at a short "Unipolar Moment" within which it must assert itself around the world to maintain its status as a superpower:

The United States is, like Britain before it, a commercial, maritime, trading nation that needs an open, stable world environment in which to thrive. In a world of Saddams, if the United States were to shed its unique superpower role, its economy would be gravely wounded. Insecure sea-lanes, impoverished trading partners, exorbitant oil prices, explosive regional instability are only the more obvious risks of an American abdication... If America wants stability, it will have to create it.<sup>182</sup>

#### **B. THE EVOLUTION OF ASIA'S STRATEGIC SIGNIFICANCE**

The United States first became involved in the Asian-Pacific region for the protection of precisely the types of economic national interests to which Krauthammer refers. Moreover, these initial Asian encounters took place long before the emergence of the Cold War and the principles of containment.

Then, as now, the primary interest in Asia for the United States and indeed the entire world was based on the economic benefits and riches that the region had to offer in terms of raw materials, and in time, the opening of largely untapped

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<sup>182</sup> Charles Krauthammer, "The Unipolar Moment," Foreign Affairs, 70, No. 1 (1991): 27,29.

consumer markets. Indeed, it was the initial success of the traders in the Pacific that inevitably led to the demand by these traders that they be protected by the U.S. Navy, and the presence of the American fleet has not vanished since. While the Royal Navy still ruled the waves in this region, the U.S. began "sporadic patrols" in the Pacific region as early as 1820.<sup>183</sup>

While trade and commerce largely dictated American interests in Asia up until World War II, it was with the advent of modest American imperialism in the Philippines that placed Asia squarely within the realm of significant foreign policy concerns and thus began to demand attention from Washington D.C. Beginning with the Philippines, and later with Japan, Korea and the smaller nations of ASEAN, the United States vigorously pursued the development of strong bilateral relationships that took the form of military assistance and protection and most importantly, economic development and selected subsidies. While these later alliances, formal and otherwise, were founded upon different criteria and within different circumstances, it would seem that the original economic value of the region and its markets were never far from the minds of U.S. policy makers.

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<sup>183</sup> Arthur Power Dudden, The American Pacific: From the Old China Trade to the Present (New York: Oxford University Press, 1992), 14-15.

With the emergence of the Cold War, the Asian perspective for U.S. foreign policy shifted to a far more global and strategic outlook. In hindsight it was necessary that the U.S. defer the obvious benefits of strictly profit-oriented free-trade with the region in deference to achieving the more significant goal of fostering strong friendships. The United States has nonetheless paid a high price for winning the Cold War, and nowhere is this more true than in Asia.

The continuing shift of economic power to East Asian competitors has been due in significant measure to the single-minded American focus on security concerns in the Asia-Pacific region. Since the Truman administration, successive presidents have subordinated U.S. economic interests to perceived geopolitical requirements. As the price for their military and diplomatic cooperation, the United States has actively promoted the economic power of its East Asian allies.<sup>184</sup>

This analysis strikes at the very heart of what serves as the major point of contention in the current reassessment of U.S.-Asian relations. Namely, further and continued military and economic concessions are no longer practical or fair from the American perspective, while at the same time the United States maintains vital economic and political interests in the region that are well served by both military presence as well as the currently favorable economic conditions. This paradox needs to be addressed by the United States first, and falls in

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<sup>184</sup> Selig S. Harrison and Clyde V. Prestowitz, Jr., 56.



line with the reassessment of overall foreign policy that is taking place around the world.

To determine national interests within Asia, it is critical that the assessment be divorced from Cold War thinking and a recycled rationale from that era. As of 1992, there exists no imminent threat to the sovereignty of the United States from Asia. While China and India both possess nuclear arsenals, the threat from those weapons pale in comparison to the Cold War arsenal of the Soviet Union, so that while they may be serious, they simply will not hold sway as criteria for the maintenance of the status quo military posture. This may be careless shortsightedness on the part of Americans, but it appears to be the publicly held sentiments of most of the population and many key decision makers.

Ironically, what lies at the heart of American national interests in Asia has led back to where the relationship started. Specifically, economic considerations are and finally can be considered as the primary concern of the United States within Asia. This affirmation of economics as central to foreign policy need not be confrontational, and indeed can take the form of economic cooperation.

The first goal of the United States must be to convince the American people that their individual lives are somehow effected by what occurs economically and politically within Asia. No small task, it can only be made by carefully explaining the facts concerning the absolute interdependence

of the world's economy, and even to a greater extent the economies of Asia and the United States. Statistics concerning U.S.-Asian trade reveal the depth of this interdependence.

Japanese GDP growth for 1990 was 4.9%. The nations of ASEAN averaged 7.4% GDP growth for the same period.<sup>185</sup> The areas where this growth has been witnessed is of particular relevance to the United States and its domestic economy.

...the prevailing pattern has entailed rapid export-led growth, ultimately including capital-intensive industrial development and innovation and production in high technology....Five of America's ten largest overseas trading partners are Asian states. Two-way U.S. trade with Japan is approximately three times that with Germany, America's second-largest overseas partner....Japan alone buys more from the United States than do Germany, France, and Italy combined....Only Canada surpasses Japan as a market for U.S. goods....East Asia (and Japan in particular) is at the forefront of a global revolution in information and communication technologies, with its imprint keenly felt in a growing array of products and services, including U.S. weapons systems and related defense technologies.<sup>186</sup>

In addition to U.S. goods being exported to these lucrative Asian markets, these countries also direct large portions of their total exports to the U.S. In 1991, Japan conducted 27% of its total trade with the United States. India (13%), China (11%), and the nations of ASEAN (16%

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<sup>185</sup> "The Military Balance 1991-92," 146-154.

<sup>186</sup> "A New Strategy and Fewer Forces: The Pacific Dimension," (Published by the Rand Corporation, Santa Monica Ca., 1992), 20-21.

average) showed similar signs of dependence on the American economic market.<sup>187</sup>

While the case can be made for global economic interdependence can and indeed has been made by the Bush and Clinton administrations, what needs to be addressed is to what extent the United States is prepared to defend those interests, especially when the danger to those interests is ambiguous and does not overtly threaten the immediate security and well-being of Americans.

The individual leaders around the Asia-Pacific region watch very carefully as this reassessment is taking place within the United States. They are frustrated in their inability to effectively shape that policy and can only stress the point that not only will they be hurt by widespread and long term instability in the region, but the United States will also feel the effects of that instability in the form of higher prices, shortages of raw materials and finished products, and most importantly for American workers, the vanishing of overseas markets in which to export their goods.

In an unusual statement tinged with anxiety, Prime Minister Kiichi Miyazawa of Japan and President Roh Tae Woo of South Korea 'agreed that a continued active United States role is indispensable to stability in the region, and voiced the expectation that the coming new United States Administration will not change this policy'....The comments reflect a concern common throughout East Asia, if little appreciated in Washington: many Asian leaders are convinced that budget constraints and a growing

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<sup>187</sup> "Asia 1992 Yearbook," 8.

isolationism are making a United States pullout from Asia inevitable....That has raised a concern that the resulting power vacuum could trigger a dangerous arms race.<sup>138</sup>

What sounds at times to Americans like alarmist and patronizing pleas, are in fact often sincere attempts at drawing this situation more clearly for American policy makers.

...There is potential for instability arising from the region's strategic and nodal location at the crossroads of the Pacific and Indian Oceans...Apart from the potential of external threats, intra-regional diversity could cause instability...The United States presence in Southeast Asia in the post Second World War period has been a major stabilizing influence. A United States withdrawal or a substantial scaling down of its military presence in Southeast Asia would create a vacuum that others would scramble to fill.<sup>139</sup>

It is in fact the inability or unwillingness of the United States to make clear its future intentions for the region that may in fact be serving to heighten the level of anxiety and in turn fuel the maritime arms buildup that this thesis has examined. It will be helpful to examine the subtle but discernible shift in strategic thinking that has occurred within Asia to illustrate this point.

The strategic importance brought about by the insular nature of this region is being borne out in the maritime

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<sup>138</sup> James Sterngold, "Japan and Korea Worry That U.S. May Pull Out," New York Times, 9 November 1992, A5.

<sup>139</sup> Ambassador Jaya Mohideen, "Security Policy in Southeast Asia- A Singapore View," Nato Review 38, No. 5 (October 1990): 28.

planning and acquisition of arms being sought by the nations of ASEAN as well as China, India and Japan. At first blush it may seem odd that the countries of ASEAN do not more aggressively endeavor to acquire more substantial "blue-water" fleets. The truth remains however that these small nations have no real need or desire to project maritime power far from their shores. They have no illusions of international naval control. They simply want to protect what they have and they see other regional players as the only imminent threat to their territory.

China and India, however, have designs on short to mid-term regional leadership and are currently pursuing aggressive naval modernization programs to that end. Japan must play a delicate balancing act of maritime modernization within the loosely interpreted limits of the U.S.-Japan defense treaty. They have the capability to strike dread in the hearts of their neighbors in much the same way China does to Malaysia and other smaller Southeast Asian neighbors. Japan, however, is hamstrung more than any other nation, by historical baggage that forces them to proceed slowly and with a wary eye toward regional reactions. Japan is well aware of the economic price to be paid for isolating and scaring off potential investors and markets with overly aggressive military modernization.

A more important aspect of the naval acquisitions examined in this thesis, however, is the fact that the increases witnessed in the procurement of fast-attack, patrol type craft



and mine-sweepers combined with strengthened air defenses, furnish these nations with enhanced self-defense or even offensive capabilities within the region. While the case has been made that Asian nations are seeking prestige through the acquisition of sophisticated weapon systems, it is clear that beyond that desire there is a clear vision of the intended purpose and predicted employment of those systems in response to the threat as envisioned, however indistinctly.

The fact remains, however, that there lingers within the minds of many Asian leaders serious doubt concerning the future American naval presence within the region. The above quote from the Singaporean Ambassador to the European Community points out this fact clearly. Indeed, future regional prosperity is seen by some leaders as hinging on the continued presence of the United States.

Preparations are clearly being made by the nations under question either to repel an attack of some kind or wage an preemptive attack with marines and amphibious craft. The missiles carried by these coastal patrol craft and the technology acquired with the mine-sweepers signifies a genuine dedication to protecting the sea-lanes that are adjacent to all these nations on at least one border. The difficulty is that other nations could see these types of purchases as attempts to gain the regional upper hand or indeed attempt some kind of regional invasion or siege. It is within this

setting of regional disquiet and apprehension that the regional arms race is being escalated.

### C. FUTURE OPTIONS FOR U.S. NAVAL PRESENCE/EMPLOYMENT

It is with an understanding of this regional context that the United States must carefully adapt its naval strategy in Asia. Total withdrawal, while conceivable, is not really feasible and will most likely not be the end result of the termination of the Cold War. Rather, the more difficult question comes when trying to decide how much involvement, when weighed against domestic constraints and the regional desires for autonomy and stability.

For the United States, cooperation could be a substitute for the reductions in U.S. global military activity...This could be seen as a logical extension of the Nixon Doctrine. Even in the Days of the 600 ship navy, the U.S. fleet was no substitute for the basic assets other nations with maritime responsibilities require for their own protection.<sup>190</sup>

This type of international naval cooperation would clearly maintain the degree of stability and regional integrity that is desired by the nations of the region and that is certainly required by the United States. This cooperation should take the form of short term, non-binding friendship type agreements with the nations of not only ASEAN, but of all the nations of

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<sup>190</sup> J.V.P. Goldrick: 65.

Asia. It would undoubtedly prove detrimental if the United States were to slip back into the outmoded Cold War style of thinking that required a vast array of binding bilateral agreements that in time would not serve the interests of the United States. This type of system tends to divide the world into clearly defined and competing camps. The United States must be capable and willing to leave as many options around the world open as possible for economic growth and development.

As alluded to throughout this thesis, the United States should make it clear in the post-Cold War world that its primary concern is the national security and well-being of its citizens (i.e., economic prosperity) and proceed to act accordingly in the conduct of its international affairs. This type of clear and unequivocal policy stance will both be respected and appreciated by the rest of the world, as well as having the corollary benefit of serving well those cooperative and friendly trading and security partners of the U.S. around the world.

While American global commitment to the improvement of human rights conditions, the promotion of democracy and increased attention to environmental issues may carry some weight in the future, it is clear that any type of intervention will be closely scrutinized to determine its long term and short term domestic economic benefits and costs. While not the only criteria, this type of parochial thinking

will certainly become a touchstone in the formation of future U.S. foreign policy.

Fostering regional naval cooperation with the United States acting as a leader among valued partners would also benefit the recipient nation and more than likely additionally foster the further purchases of U.S. naval arms, which necessarily would require some degree of training by the supplier nation providing an economic incentive to the U.S. taxpayer.<sup>191</sup> This type of naval/military cooperation would not only help to alleviate U.S. naval requirements, but it would also serve to allay the fears of the Asian nations over the perceived imminent departure of the U.S. Navy.

This is not to say that there is multi-lateral consensus on the United States playing this type of a role. In fact, as has been pointed out earlier, the U.S. presence, while providing a degree of stability, has also be a point of contention with some of the nations of ASEAN for example. With the close relationship between the United States and the Philippines undergoing fundamental transition, there is a good deal of apprehension about the United States receiving greater temporary resupply and repair privileges in the ports of Singapore, Malaysia, and Thailand.

Singapore's former Prime Minister Lee Kwan Yew has been very outspoken on this issue. He insists that the economic

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<sup>191</sup> J.V.P. Goldrick, 66.

benefits that are now being reaped by the entire region have arisen as a direct result of the constant U.S. naval presence within Southeast Asia.<sup>142</sup> While this issue has been resolved for the time being, the underlying regional issues of ethnic and cultural mistrust and suspicion have not been eliminated and will remain a sore point for some time to come.

While these types of coalition building and cooperative measures may provide the needed reassurance to Asian allies as well as a degree of fiscal relief to the U.S. economy, the question remains as to the actual scope, numbers and types of U.S. forces that will form the remaining core of American presence in Asia. It will be helpful to examine the statistics as they currently apply to the region and compare those to the region's future and to other regions around the world, specifically Europe. The final section of this chapter examines possible force postures and their various implications.

While there have been some minor drawdowns in forces up to the time of this report, for purposes of analysis it may be assumed that the figures in Table 3 represent the Cold War force levels for the Pacific region. Quite clearly the navy carries the bulk of the burden in this region and in conjunction with the Marine Corps (USMC), accounts for 59% of

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<sup>142</sup> Sheldon Simon, 100.



the total personnel force in the region while being allotted 55% of the DOD budget for the region.

The mobility of the U.S. Navy and Marine Corps (USMC) is a valuable asset, but its worth is difficult to compare to the traditional ground occupation and permanent presence aspects of Army and Air forces. In terms of the Cold War rationale, the two groups served quite different and important functions, some of which can clearly be drastically scaled back or even eliminated within the shifting context of post-Cold War regional security.

As one example, the presence of U.S. Army forces on the ground in Korea has led to the development of a long-term and mutually beneficial political as well as economic relationship between the two countries. While there was clearly a well defined Cold War rationale for the maintenance of these forces, the corollary benefits of this relationship have

TABLE 3

## SUMMARY OF U.S. ARMED FORCES IN THE PACIFIC (MARCH 1990)

<u>BRANCH</u>	<u># OF PERSONNEL*</u>	<u>TOTAL COST**</u>
ARMY	74,600	\$3,673
NAVY	158,518	\$7,802
AIR FORCE	60,078	\$3,725
MARINE CORPS	38,190	\$1,414
<u>TOTAL</u>	331,386	\$16,614

\*Total includes military and civilian support personnel.

\*\*Dollars in U.S. millions.

Source: United States General Accounting Office, Report to Congressional Requesters, "Military Presence: U.S. Personnel in the Pacific Theater," U.S. GAO, August 1991.

provided South Korea the opportunity to achieve economic independence while Northeast Asian security was maintained primarily by the presence of U.S. forces. With the primary justification for this presence (North Korea) in the process of decline, that presence itself can now be reevaluated, as indeed it has been in the three phase drawdown proposed by Secretary of Defense Cheney in the "Strategic Framework."

This type of long term role as guardian of foreign security interests may be relinquished in the future. While the army served this purpose particularly well, it is clear that within this largely maritime and insular region, the employment of naval forces in the future will prove to be the most advisable type of military force.

In terms of a new approach to force posture and employment, the mobility of naval forces, including the USMC, will continue to serve not only strategic benefit but also function to lower the overall cost of a new posture insofar as naval forces can be quickly adapted to respond with force to any area within the Asian region.

The range of options for future military presence in the region will nonetheless include all arms of the military, with modifications based primarily on budget constraints and perceived regional threats. What remains consistent throughout most analyses is the critical role that the navy will play in the future. The following force posture proposals have been gleaned from a recent Rand Corporation

report which outlines a variety of options for future military presence in Asia. It provides an excellent framework within which to discuss the issue of defense drawdowns and their effect on U.S. military forces in the region. While this list cannot be considered entirely inclusive, it does address the scope of options from complete engagement to the virtual elimination of forces in Asia.

The posture outlines are as follows<sup>193</sup>:

A) Cold War force- this level is self-explanatory and, of course entirely unreasonable in light of domestic budget constraints and actual strategic requirements. It is presented primarily for comparison purposes.

B) The Base Force- This level assumes a 15% drawdown in the region (as compared to level A), and indeed functions as the structure being currently pursued by the Bush Administration within Phase I of the Strategic Framework.

C) Reduced Base Access Force- This posture assumes a drastic retrenchment of U.S. forces in terms of withdrawal from all U.S. bases in Asia. Force size is similar to level B, but all U.S. forces have been relocated to either Hawaii, Guam, or Alaska. The authors consider this posture, while not the most austere of options, by far the most dangerous and destabilizing, stating in part that "...such a drastic change

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<sup>193</sup> "A New Strategy and Fewer Forces: The Pacific Dimension," 53 passim.

would likely produce a range of negative military and political responses throughout Northeast Asia.<sup>194</sup>"

D) Pacific Swing Force- Force level is similar to B and C, but the forces are available to CINCCENT for use in support of crises in the Persian Gulf. While responding to these crises, all maritime and military exercises as well as port visits in the Pacific will be eliminated, as the majority of forces will be outside of the region.

E) Lower Budget Force- This level assumes a 35% decrease from level A, and calls for severe cuts to all aspects of the U.S. military presence. While base privileges will be maintained, they will be only used sporadically by a greatly reduced and less visible force.

F) Lower Budget Swing Force- This last level is a combination of D and E, and provides the least amount of forward presence over time and will have its greatest effect on ground and air forces in Asia, these forces being all but eliminated.

The present regional naval buildup as examined in this thesis combined with the regional apprehension that is both fueling and being fueled by this buildup provides the most imminent threat to the mid to long-term security of the U.S. in the Asia-Pacific region. A continued American military presence is clearly going to be maintained in the region, and

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<sup>194</sup> "A New Strategy and Fewer Forces: The Pacific Dimension, 53.



it can undoubtedly be scaled back to meet the 35% goal set by some, while at the same time providing protection for vital economic markets in the region.

Meeting this goal will require the eventual removal of all forces in Korea and a significant scaling back of both naval and other forces from Japan, somewhat in line with posture C. As mentioned in Chapter III, it will be critical to remain actively engaged in terms of Japanese defense for the benefit of all players in the region. Removal of all U.S. ground forces in Asia, while eventually desirable, would not be prudent in the case of Japan until a stable regional power structure has evolved and been in place for some time.

As the analysis of this thesis implies, it would be unwise for the U.S. military in Asia to perform a kind of double duty in Asia by functioning as a "swing force." While in actual situations such forces could certainly be called upon to assist in other areas of the world as crises require, it would send the wrong signal to Asia if the United States were to plan as a primary mission for Asian forces an explicitly non-Asian role. This would reinforce Asian views that the United States cares less for Asia and Asians than other people and parts of the world.

In line with pursuing a target of 35% reduction in U.S. military troops in Asia, and the prudent scaling back of permanent American ground forces, a combination of posture C (Reduced Base Access) and posture E (Lower Budget Force) would

best meet U.S. goals. A careful blending of these two approaches would meet the future requirements for United States security needs in Asia.

By positioning the U.S. Navy as the primary force in terms of Asian presence, the United States reserves the right to act unilaterally while at the same time fostering goodwill and friendship building with the mobility and inherent visibility of these naval forces. Because naval forces are so mobile, less of them are required to fulfill the visibility and presence function that stands as the primary objective for U.S. forces in Asia in the future. It must be clear to all the nations of Asia that the United States cares about its interests in Asia and that the U.S. Navy is prepared to protect those interests unilaterally or in conjunction with a coalition of Asian partners.

Cooperation and coalitions can and should be encouraged with the United States taking the lead in such measures. These types of operations, as mentioned above, should take the form of non-binding and short-term joint maritime maneuvers and training. These examples of innovative thinking in terms of maintaining long held friendships and forming new relationships will prove helpful in maintaining the level of regional security required for U.S. economic interests to proceed uninhibited by disruptive and costly regional conflict.

As Charles Krauthammer noted above, the stability that the United States will require in the future interdependent world will have to be maintained by the U.S. armed forces. While burden-sharing and widespread base access will be examples of new ways of employing and funding those forces, it remains the case that U.S. forces will and should be prepared to act unilaterally to protect perceived threats to the domestic well-being of American citizens and their interests.

In the future, that well-being could be threatened far from American shores and could arise with little to no warning. In this region, maintenance of a vigilant maritime presence and the ability to project naval power ashore and at sea on short notice provides the American people with a prudent insurance policy against threats to their economic well being.

## VII. CONCLUSION

Is the Pacific Ocean a new Mediterranean Sea already binding its people together instead of separating them? Do its restless currents forecast an enlightened, peaceful tomorrow, or renascent hostility ominous for the future of humankind? Will Americans continue to venture westward in the bold spirit of earlier generations? To do so they shall have to reassert the courage, foresight, and a sense of purpose of their forebearers. Otherwise, future historians may be compelled to record a waning of the American epoch.<sup>195</sup>

This thesis has examined the nature and scope of a new naval arms buildup within the Asian region. Even more important than the increase and modernization of the maritime forces, a fundamental shift is underway in strategic thinking that is forming the rationale for the types of vessels and systems being acquired. Leading nations in the region are shifting their military strengths toward fending off maritime threats or preempting such a threat by occupation or invasion.

There is a widespread concern among the nations involved in this study that the United States is on the threshold of retrenching from its international commitments that have served to define regional stability for forty-five years. In response to this perception, these nations have unilaterally assumed a greater burden for affecting the regional power balance. None of these nations wants to see any of the others

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<sup>195</sup> Arthur Power Dudden, 271.

gaining the regional upper hand. The maritime arms race, seen in this context, functions as a vicious circle of arms acquisition, and as such is inherently destabilizing.

The increase in regional tension and mistrust can be witnessed in a variety of small scale conflicts that currently threaten to spill over into violence. Each inter-regional dispute if taken in solo poses no imminent threat to the newly emerging security interest of the United States. It is the pattern of apprehension, however, lying just below the surface of regional relationships, now being fueled by the arms buildup, that could completely disrupt this region, and as such have profound effects upon the long term economic well-being of the United States.

The varied and historically complex relationships between all the nations of the region may mistakenly lead the United States to a policy of letting these countries "sort out their differences" now that the risk of U.S.-Soviet confrontation has been removed. This short term perspective could prove catastrophic for the future of U.S. economic and political prosperity.

China, Japan, and India have begun in earnest the struggle for regional domination in Asia. Their respective naval forces are showing signs of growth and technological evolution. These countries can all be considered regional powers aspiring to regional dominance and worldwide recognition. Regional tensions and ethnic animosities within



and among these and the other nations of Asia will stand as the primary obstacle to any one nation gaining the decisive upper hand in terms of military power.

While the outcome of this Asian security restructuring is unclear, the United States can clearly not afford to stand idly by, or worse, watch from a distant American shore, while this restructuring takes place. A continued, albeit reconsidered U.S. military presence is required to maintain a viable and effective voice in Asian affairs for an economically interdependent America.

There are costs to maintaining a vibrant and globally competitive American economy in the post-Cold War era. These costs are relatively high, but not beyond America's capability. They do involve a commitment to maintaining military forces commensurate with American worldwide interests. The U.S. Navy poses the most cost effective means of providing that military presence in Asia. The Navy provides a permanent lever by which the U.S. can control or influence events and decisions in Asia that directly effect the American citizen.

The U.S. Navy is also an excellent bargaining tool for the future. The nations of Asia clearly desire such a naval presence by the United States. It should be made clear to these nations that they must pay an economic quid pro quo for the benefits of stability that they receive from American naval presence. Their navies are not capable of providing

this type of security, and in the future the United States should not willingly provide it unless favorable economic terms can be gained in areas that can benefit the United States, for example in much more open markets for American food and services. Thus economic benefits can be derived, however subtly, from the presence of U.S. naval forces in Asia and at the same time those forces can provide the most economical protection for the valuable and long held American interests in the region.

It is essential that the United States come to a distinct definition of the future for U.S. national interests. These interests will have at their core U.S. economic concerns around the world. There can be no more important region in the world than Asia in terms of U.S. economic investments and involvement. Protecting, enhancing and insuring the conservation of those interests should remain a top priority for U.S. defense planners.

Finally, above all else, it is critical for the United States to explicitly define its worldwide interests and the attendant effects that the current reassessment will have on the conduct of both foreign affairs and military employment around the world. In this light, taking all the uncertainty and regional mistrust being displayed within Asia, the maintenance of a strong and visible maritime force will provide U.S. leaders and Asian allies with the most expedient and effective means of providing needed stability and













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